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*The
Miracle
of
Peille*

J. L. Campbell
HAS ALSO WRITTEN
FACE VALUE

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The Miracle of Peille

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"Face Value," etc.

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The Miracle of Peille

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To
EDITH
and
JOHN
MANNING

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of
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I

*H*IGH up in the mountains behind Monte Carlo is perched La Turbie, a tiny village with grey houses, green plane trees and a large second-rate hotel. From La Turbie the roofs of Monte Carlo glisten in the sunlight. Tropical flowers bloom in the gardens and many motors skim along the smooth roads, up and down, winding in and out along the mountain sides. A doll's paradise, a doll's beautiful paradise. During the season the tiny cars sweep up the steep road with the sure strength of eagles in flight and, as they near La Turbie, are transformed into huge motors filled with rich people. They laugh and are tired, discuss baccarat and look at the view, then rush down again to join the busy glittering toys below. They have missed the turning on the right, a narrow shelf of a road that quickly disappears behind a cliff. It is like a lizard basking in the sun, with only the tip of its tail exposed. But the people of La Turbie know it well, for it goes to Peille.

They drive their goats along it, trudge with faggots on their heads along it, ride in creaking carts along it, and on summer nights young couples stroll along it, moving slowly, and not thinking of the stars nor of the black mysterious gorges between the bare mountains. The road to Peille is a good place for lovers. Many hearts have been broken there. Now it has a new office. The people of La Turbie travel it for a new purpose. For Thérèse Ursule Corbeille lived there.

Thérèse Ursule Corbeille—the lovely Monte Carlo has not even heard her name. Yet the hour will surely come when Monte Carlo will add its crisp notes to swell the pile of copper sous collected in the mountains, and all for the defence of Thérèse Ursule Corbeille before the Pope in Rome. The day will surely come when purple bishops and red-robed cardinals will assemble in the Vatican to plead for Thérèse Ursule Corbeille. For no saint is canonised without a struggle.

.

The daughter of a shepherd and a gipsy woman, she was born in April. Her mother

stayed in bed only two days and then she tied her baby on her back and climbed the mountains. There she spent her days with her husband. The peasants did not like her; she did not gather faggots for the evenings and she sang to the goats to keep them from straying. Massino Corbeille was the handsomest man in the village. He could have had any woman in Peille. This was another point against his wife.

Or was the gipsy woman his wife? There was no record of a marriage ceremony. She just suddenly appeared in Peille and he took her to live in an abandoned chapel above the town. Virgins, saints, martyrs and sheep gazed from its walls with the blank stare of eyes to which days mean nothing as they watch the centuries pass. Grey ruins surrounded the chapel. They were all that was left of the great Monastère de Peille, founded under the personal direction of Our Lord, by the Abbé Sextus in the second century.

“It’s a sacrilege!” “Run them out!”

One night the villagers filled their hands with stones. The idea of a gipsy in their midst!

They crept to the door and peeped in. There she sat. The men who led the way hesitated; holding the stones they had collected in limp fingers, they wonder what to do. If Massino had been with her they could have hurled abuse. Total passivity is a powerful weapon.

The woman rose to her feet and began to undress slowly. Her bare arms, then her breasts and body gleamed in the pale light. On a tanned sheepskin at her feet lay her baby. She moved as though she were alone. The men lurked spellbound in the darkness. There was a sound of laboured breathing up the mountain side. Mère Lupez elbowed her way to the fore. She was not frightened. Oh, the shameless hussy! A gipsy slut, naked in the moonlight, unashamed before the sons, husbands and old men of Peille. Unashamed before the gentle eyes of Christ that gazed from off the painted walls.

"Beat her, stone her, never mind the bastard brat!" Mère Lupez threw the first stone.

Pandemonium followed. Sticks, mud, anything that came to hand. Holding her baby, the gipsy woman disappeared up the hill, run-

ning swiftly. Her body was slender. She did not cry out once. Some of the men were all for following her, but Mère Lupez prevented that. They burned her clothes and broke up the few miserable bits of furniture instead.

"That will teach him to bring a heathen gipsy woman here—and in a chapel too!"

The men spat and went to their homes to sleep. It was ten o'clock, too late for any honest man to be about.

Some children found the body in the morning. She must have missed her footing in the dark. The baby was still alive. Madame Tulec wrapped the dead woman in a sheet. Two men carried her to the ruined chapel. A boy was sent to find Massino. He was high up in the mountains. No one ever told him why his wife had met her death. He stood beside her limp young body, unable to believe it was the end.

They had dressed her in coarse black serge with a red flannel petticoat. There were thorns still in her hair. All her wildness was gone, the wildness that Massino had loved, that he understood.

The priest came up with his cold comfort. His soutane was dirty and his shoes had cracks. Massino listened to him, but did not answer. From the ground beside the dead woman the baby whimpered. Madame Tulec picked her up and tried to feed her with goat's milk on a soaked rag. The chapel was filled with women. They felt they had Massino back again. Men hovered before the door. The sun beat down and flies buzzed.

"What was her name?"

Massino shook his head. "I called her 'Tu.' "

Mère Lupez said it was a good riddance. The Abbé refused to bury a suicide in holy ground. Massino drove them all away. Not until the place was empty did he notice the charred remains of his furniture. He looked at it dully. His was not a brain for reasons. "Tu" was dead, his furniture was burned, life was full of mysteries. The tears streamed down his cheeks. He dug a hole near his door and stripped the body of its coarse clothing. The slender olive limbs looked more familiar. She was so young. Thorns had torn her skin

in many places. He washed the blood away and buried her. No prayers were said.

The sun was setting. It cast a rosy glow across the valley. Already the village had resumed its usual life—chickens clucking, goats bleating, and a grey donkey descending a rocky path, its back laden with green boughs. Mas-sino stuck sprays of apple, plum and cherry in the mound of soft earth to mark the grave. At the head he placed a board on which he burned the date together with the letters “T” and “U.” His tears fell on the baby’s face. Making a cross on her forehead with his rough forefinger, he called her Thérèse Ursule. The child ceased crying after that and people now say that all that night there was music in the air. A strange, sweet music, sometimes like a harp, sometimes like a distant singing.

In the valley lights began to twinkle. Over the mountains and beside the sea Monte Carlo laughed and drank and the croupiers went on with their monotonous calling “Messieurs faites vos jeux,” “Les jeux sont faits,” “Rien ne va plus.”

II

EVERY day Massino took the baby girl with him on the mountain tops. She was his only companion. He fed her on goat's milk and when she was older upon cheese and bread. She lay quite still and watched the sky. From the first day he talked to her as to an equal. He told her how he had met "Tu" standing near a waterfall. She had got separated from her caravan and her eyes were dimmed from wandering in the August sun. "She never got back her clear sight after that." She had put her arms around his neck when he kissed her. "Aye, and slept under a roof which was against her beliefs, the poor creature."

Thérèse Ursule blinked in the dazzling light while Massino went on talking. In the evenings he made up stories around the drawings on the walls. Here were the poor martyrs who shed their blood to give strength to weak, ignorant men and women. There stood the Holy Virgin all in white with a blue scarf in her

hands—"a bit of Heaven she keeps to wrap us in. She watches over us. See, her eyes are always on me as I move about the room."

When Thérèse Ursule was older she would crawl around the chapel and always the eyes of the Blessed Virgin gazed into her own. They filled her with emotion, accused her of the Crucifixion of Our Lord. She, Thérèse Ursule, was born in sin. She, Thérèse Ursule, must use her strength to wipe the mortal slate so stained by Christ's Gethsemane. She held up her weak hands in supplication, wiped the pale painted forehead of Our Lord with gentle fingers. Her earliest words were prayers.

The village people sneered. Massino let no one near his home. Even the Abbé returned to his vin rosé. What could he do? The child was not even baptised. Her father would not let him touch her. Three times he had climbed the steep slope to the chapel. Each time Massino drove him away.

"Bury adulterers, murderers and thieves in holy ground, old man, it's your affair. Leave me and mine alone. The Lord is our shepherd. We do not need an imitation Christ."

The last time Massino threw stones. The old man galloped puffing down the hill. Mère Lupez made him rest beside her door. He fanned his hot brow in the shade of a fig tree. She bound large fresh leaves round his ankle, bruised by his hasty descent. She gave him some raspberry wine and wanted to raise the village against Massino and his gipsy brat, but the priest refused to let her.

“No, no, my daughter. We must not allow the Devil that has filled his soul to control us also. Pray without ceasing for the child and let nature take its course. You may fill my glass once more, then perhaps your son will help me home.”

Mère Lupez poured out the bright pink wine. When it was drunk she called Emmanuel and made him support the wounded soldier of Christ to his bed. The streets of Peille are all steps, narrow steps running under arches and between grey walls down to the edge of a precipice which drops a sheer thousand feet to the valley below.

Emmanuel Lupez was sixteen, the youngest of nineteen children and the only one remain-

ing with his mother. Five of his brothers were in the navy, three sisters had gone out into the world, and the rest of the large family was buried beneath beads and wire beside the village church. He was filled with one desire—to go to America. A dazzling, promised land where Freedom reigned. A long way off, further than Nice, further than Marseilles even. Now, as he passed the edge of the cliff in the Abbé's garden, he longed for wings to carry him across the valley and over the mountain tops.

The Abbé took a bright key from his pocket. "Here, my son, unlock the side drawer in that desk."

Emmanuel did so. It was filled with money. Copper, silver, and notes as well. The boy's eyes glistened.

"Go to Monsieur Suluson's shop, give him two francs and bring back the wine he hands you. Give the poor man my blessing and say that I sent you."

The priest groaned. His ankle hurt him. Emmanuel locked the drawer and returned the key, then climbed the Rue du Feu to fetch the

wine. Massino was standing in the doorway of the shop. In his hands he held a heavy cedar stick. Monsieur Suluson, who quarrelled with no man, was his only friend in Peille. Emmanuel sidled through the door and into the dark interior. On one side shelves lined with gay bottles reached to the ceiling. On the other boots, garlic, checked calicos, grain, knives and many other mysteries filled every inch of space. "And all these things might be mine if I had the money in that drawer," thought the boy.

Monsieur Suluson handed him the bottle. Yes, it was for use in the Church next day. The good man came himself to fetch it as a rule. Massino listened without speaking. Emmanuel looked at him slyly.

"Well, the poor old fellow's lame now. That's what he gets when he tries to help the evil."

Emmanuel persisted. It was pleasant to linger there in the cool of the evening and rouse Massino's passion. He felt so young and limber. Sheep baa'd from a house across the road. A black cow looked through a small

window and lowed gently. Emmanuel redoubled his taunts. Massino could stand no more. Waving his cedar stick he swore the priest or any other meddler would feel its weight across his skull if he ventured to the chapel.

Monsieur Suluson tried to calm him. One or two idlers drew near the door. An old woman crossed herself when she heard him swearing. Massino had sold his soul to the Devil. It was wrong living up there in a chapel, a sacrilege. And laming their good priest too. Massino stood, a Herculean figure.

Yes, he was undoubtedly mad. They said the Evil One ate supper with him every evening. Old Poulbot had been late coming down the mountain one night in March. He had heard voices in the chapel, men's voices, and through a chink in the door he had seen a black hairy figure squatted on the ground. He had heard the little girl crying and calling on the Lord. It was a fearful sight and sound. Surely it was God's vengeance that made the child a cripple; for she was long past walking age, yet she crept on the ground like a worm. Old Poulbot had crossed himself and run away, but

too late. His eyes had witnessed evil, it had pursued him and tripped him up and cut his knee. Look, the scar was still there. Monsieur Suluson remembered how he had come in for a drink, Eau de Mar. He had been bleeding and sweating though the snow was still a foot deep. All these things and many more were whispered as Massino's wrath increased.

It was almost dark when Emmanuel started down the hill. He was full of excitement. A candle was burning beside the Abbé. Propped up by pillows, he was reading a Holy book. Emmanuel entered softly. The little white-washed room was quiet and homelike. A wooden crucifix hung on one wall; beneath it stood the desk with all its fortune. Emmanuel placed the wine upon a table.

"Thank you, my son. May the Holy Virgin guide you always."

The night was dark, the sky was filled with stars. Emmanuel stood on the edge of the cliff. A breeze blew softly. He heard someone calling and then the music of a concertina. Inside the house bedsprings creaked, shadows

flickered on the walls. The old priest sighed; then the pad of bare feet on bare boards followed the grating of a lock. Emmanuel stood quite still, not even breathing. At last the house was dark. He crept to the window and pressed his nose against the pane. There was no sound. He stood for a long time neither thinking nor planning, just standing, as many stupid people do. An owl flew heavily across the valley, then hooted sadly. Emmanuel shivered. Was that the Devil, Massino's friend and confidant?

Suddenly the window beside him opened. The priest looked out. Emmanuel flattened himself against the wall. The old man did not see him. His tonsure shone palely in the darkness. His neck was weak and stringy. Emmanuel longed to squeeze it, just to give the old boy a fright. His hand crept forward. His fingers tingled. It was all he could do to keep from giggling. The old man looked at the stars. An iron hand gripped his neck. He gave a smothered frightened cry, started, and struck his head against the heavy window frame. There was no further sound. Em-

manuel stood trembling in excited terror. He was afraid to let go. The Abbé might recognise him. The neck he grasped felt full of chords and the flesh was loose and wrinkled. The head lolled oddly to one side. It was very heavy. This could not last for ever. He slowly released his grip. The music of the concertina rose and fell in the clear night air. The old man lay quite still. Emmanuel waited. Then he put out his finger and touched the forehead on the window sill. He touched the cheeks and then the chin. There was something wet and sticky on the chin. It smelled like blood.

Up the hillside, skirting the houses and keeping in the shadow, Emmanuel ran. The priest was dead. What should he do? He was guided by instinct alone. That led him across the road and over the walls of the ruined monastery. This spot was haunted. No one would come here after dark. The concertina's plaintive strain continued. A thin crack of light showed through the chapel door. This was a night of adventure. There was no tomorrow. Emmanuel would see Massino's devilish visi-

tors. They might even help him, now he had joined their ranks.

A stone rolled from beneath his feet as he neared Massino's door. It fell clattering down the slope. Emmanuel's lips were dry and tight. His teeth chattered and he could not help laughing. The door opened. Massino stood before him. Emmanuel sprang into a shadow. A moment later something crashed beside him. It was the cedar stick. Once more all was quiet, only the music of the concertina. Soon the moon would be rising. Emmanuel picked up the stick. It was a comfortable weight, a good weapon. He swung it in the air.

Picking his way carefully, he crept back to the Abbé's house. The figure still lay across the window sill. Emmanuel watched it excitedly. The first rays of the moon lighted up the cotton night shirt and the thin fringe of white hair. Motionless, limp, dead. Death is a terrible enemy. The boy rushed at it, beat it with the heavy stick, and when that was finished, climbed past the thing into the room. Swinging the weapon round his head, he broke the lamp, the cups, the chairs, the desk, every-

thing the house contained. Even the Holy Cross was trampled on the floor. He filled his pockets with the Church's money and left the place. His hands were wet. In the strong moonlight the blood on them showed black. He washed them in a mountain stream, then lay on his back to rest. The money bulged his pockets. America was within his reach. Blue seas, great ships, beautiful women; he could live now.

A soft voice spoke his name. It was Marie Dumaine. Her hair was down. She came and stood beside him. She said her father was drunk; he would beat her if she went back. There was fresh dried hay in a shed near by. Emmanuel took her there. She laughed and clung to him. She said she had always loved him.

It was her idea that one of the notes and some of the silver should be hidden in Massino's chapel.

III

Two days later Massino was arrested for the murder of Père Raoul Mercier. His cedar stick was found bloodstained in the Abbé's garden, the Abbé's money was found bloodstained in Massino's dwelling. Many people had heard him threaten the Abbé from Monsieur Sulu-son's door, on the afternoon of the murder, too. And lastly Marie Dumaine described how her father had driven her out of doors and while she was trying to find shelter in a cowshed Massino had passed her, climbing up the path from the Abbé's house. The moon was bright. Massino's hands were dripping. Come, she would show them the spot. Red stains were on the stones beside the pool. Marie wept as she described her terror and the villagers tried to calm her.

"He was talking all the time and a strange dark shape flickered at his side. I hid my eyes and prayed for protection. Even so the monster swore he would get me."

The simple people crossed themselves and looked fearfully up towards the ruined monastery. A few gnarled olive trees, the remains of thick grey stone walls, and some coarse grass waving in the breeze were all they saw. But such is the power of imagination that these ignorant folk were frightened. To them this tranquil scene was like a fearful pool, hiding beneath its calm surface the dangers of Hell, the powers of torment. No one would go up there—and the child, Thérèse Ursule, lay in the doorway and wondered why her father was so late. She was nine years old now and accustomed to solitude.

In the waning daylight the Holy Virgin smiled Her gentle smile, held out the blue scarf and gazed with century-laden eyes upon the dying Jesus bleeding at her feet. Large snow-white butterflies flapped slowly back and forth, now coming to rest on Thérèse Ursule's hand, her shoulder, or sometimes in her hair. They seemed to form a fluttering fantastic wreath around her head. Wrens, blue birds, tiny yellow sparrows fed from her fingers. They were not afraid; no ghosts nor evil spirits had ever

attacked them from that door. Tiny rabbits crept to her knees for shelter. Even the field mice scampered about quite undisturbed.

The western sun threw out its coloured streamers. The mountains loomed, deep purple, in the distance. The village church bell tolled, slowly, so slowly. Its ringing echoed down the valley. And then the darkness came. Thérèse Ursule did not move. She could not sit upright without support. Perhaps she had been born a cripple, perhaps her mother's fatal fall had lamed her. The country doctor could not say. He was Peille's final word in surgery. The stars came out, the moon rose, an owl hooted. Thérèse Ursule still waited.

Dawn blew freshly across the barren mountain tops. Dew trembled in the spider webs and on the grass. A bent brown-looking man drove two agile goats up from the village. The sun rose. A lark sang. Thérèse Ursule had been asleep.

It was Madame Tulec who had taken the crippled child from her dead mother's arms and it was she who came to the rescue now. She carried the little girl down into the village.

Her house had only two rooms, one above the other, and stood in a narrow street. She was a widow with two daughters, one twelve and the other eleven years old. Her husband had been a cobbler and when he died Madame Tulec had taken up his work. All day long she sat on a stool hammering sharp pointed nails into thick cowhide. Everyone in the village brought her boots and shoes to mend. They lay in a heap near her side. In a window was placed a neat row of new foot wear. Heavy boots for men, thick shoes for women, and little unwieldly round-looking slippers for children. Some were ornamented with brass and fancy stitching. All were made by Madame Tulec. Strips of kid and whole tanned cowhides lay on the floor; boxes of nails, waxed threads, needles and cobbler's tools were on a shelf. In summer the street door stood open and there was a great coming and going. The whole place smelled of leather.

Into this busy atmosphere the kind woman now brought Thérèse Ursule. She laid her on the heap of hides, called to Céleste, her eldest

daughter, to bring some food, then set about her usual work.

Céleste advanced cautiously. She had never seen Thérèse Ursule close to before. How pale her face was and how limp and useless her bare feet looked lying on the brown skins. She was the daughter of a murderer, she had talked to the Devil. Old Poulbot had seen her at it. Perhaps she did not need legs. Perhaps as soon as darkness fell she spread her arms and flew like a bat from roof to roof, over the mountains and to distant places. Céleste put down the glass of milk and bit of bread, then retreated to the stairway. Tap, tap, tap, went Madame Tulec's hammer. Thérèse Ursule took a sip of milk and ate a crumb of bread. This dim, close, leathery place was very strange. There were no holy paintings on the walls, no view from the window, and all who came to the door stared at her, crossed themselves and went away.

At midday Madame Tulec got up from her work, closed the door and left the house. She did not return until nightfall.

"I have been to see your father."

"Where is he?" Thérèse Ursule looked up from the floor with anxious eyes.

Madame Tulec untied the scarf about her head and lit a lamp, a small glass lamp with a metal shade. She sighed and compressed her lips into a straight line.

"He has gone on a journey."

"He did not say good-bye."

"No, he couldn't."

"When does he return?"

"I do not know. Perhaps never."

Thérèse Ursule clasped her hands and lay quite still. Madame Tulec had expected an outburst, tears, grief, entreaties. "Her mind is as weak as her legs," she thought. The clatter of sabots as someone passed the door broke the silence. Madame Tulec sat down on her cobbler's stool to rest. She had walked a long way.

"Did my father send me no message?"

"He did. 'Tell Thérèse Ursule that if ever she enters the door of a Church my soul shall burn in Hell.' There is his message, a wicked, sinful message, but I could not refuse to deliver the last words of a doomed man to his child."

Madame Tulec was not given to much talk.

She had probably never said so many words at once before. The message delivered, she got up, went to the door and called her children. They had been afraid to stay alone in the house with Massino's daughter.

"The Lord's will be done." Thérèse Ursule's voice was just a whisper.

"Yes, my child, it will be done. The Lord's will is always done."

Céleste and Madeleine crept into the room. They glanced at Thérèse Ursule sideways. Now was the time for her to lift her arms and fly. All the children said she did. They saw only a pale face with closed eyes.

"She must be asleep." They tiptoed round the stove.

"Look, her lips are moving." Céleste bent forward.

"O Holy Mother, pour on my head the cup of misery for the world that I may suffer for mankind."

Suddenly the room was filled with light. It must have been the bacon burning. But there was no smell.

IV

A NEW priest came to Peille, a young man with blue eyes and kind hands. They called him Abbé Castel. Everybody liked him. New furniture was put in the Presbytère and the walls were freshly whitewashed. He planted geraniums along the edge of the cliff. They hung down, a shower of red, their crimson petals dropping in the valley far below.

On the day the Abbé Castel arrived Emmanuel Lupez disappeared and with him Marie Dumaine. "They have gone to see Massino die," people said. But the day of the execution passed and neither Marie nor Emmanuel returned. Mère Lupez wept. She blamed Thérèse Ursule. "She put the evil spirit on him. Massino and the Devil cursed Marie, no wonder the poor young things have run away." Each night she placed a lighted candle in her window to guide the wanderers home. At dawn she drove her goats to the highest peak

and while they browsed she scanned the road to Peille. A tired, old, bitter woman.

Madame Tulec protected Thérèse Ursule from her anger. The poor child lay all day on the heap of leather. Céleste and Madeleine grew fond of her. The villagers grew accustomed to her. They scarcely saw her in the shadow. Sorting nails, waxing thread, cutting leather, she was never idle. Often her lips would move. She would smile, nod her head, hold out her hands, just as though she had a visitor. "It is the Holy folk come down from the chapel to comfort me." Madame Tulec would nod and go on with her work. She was too busy to interfere with other people's thoughts. Besides, the child was cracked. Not surprising with such parents. Often the Abbé Castel came and sat in the doorway to talk. Thérèse Ursule lay still and listened when he was there. At first he begged her to be christened. Then the tears streamed down her face and she was taken with a great trembling. Even her teeth clattered in her head. Finally, the good man gave up, contenting himself with

talking of the Scriptures, recounting the miracles of St. Francis and other holy subjects.

Young people were married, old ones buried, babies were born, flowers bloomed, olives ripened, snow fell on the mountain tops. The years passed.

Thérèse Ursule grew too heavy to be lifted to the room above. All day and all night she lay in the same corner. She was fourteen years old.

"Aren't you frightened down here alone in the dark?" Madeleine asked. She was a big strapping girl and when she moved in the room above the boards creaked. She liked a flower in her hair, had white teeth, rosy cheeks, and an eye for the young men of the village. Céleste was more like her mother and was learning to make shoes.

"I am not alone; it is not dark. When the lamp goes out that wall is rolled away and I see the sky, the birds, the stars, flowers and butterflies. Sometimes I hear music; soft voices talk to me."

Madeleine shook her head incredulously. Thérèse Ursule gave her much to talk about

when she wandered in the twilight with Louis Sixte Gioanni.

"And do you know, she nearly starves herself! Just takes a bite here and there."

"No!" and Louis Sixte wondered if Madeleine would let him kiss her.

"It's a fact." Madeleine looked at him sideways. He had crisp curly hair. "She gives it all to the beasts, stray dogs and cats. And one day"—Madeleine tossed her head and laughed immoderately—"I found her trying to feed a worm. 'What are you doing?' I asked her. And what do you think she answered?"

He shook his head. Madeleine's lips were as red as cherries. Deep blue gentians cloaked the mountain sides.

"She said, 'This creature can move in the manner that is natural to it, so it is better than I, for I am useless!'"

Louis Sixte clicked his tongue in wonder. The sun set. The first star glowed.

"There—old Mère Lupez has lit her candle. I'd better be going in."

Madeleine stood hesitating. His sun-burned hand crept forward and took her firm fingers

shyly. She pretended not to notice. They hurried past the ruined monastery. No one went there nowadays, not since Massino left. The twigs he had stuck in "Tu's" grave had taken root and grown into a tree, a strange tree with apple, plum and cherry blossoms all at once. In the deepening gloom the white flowering boughs glowed dimly, swaying in the evening breeze.

Once past the ruin Madeleine stopped for breath. Suddenly the young man kissed her on her cheek. Their faces bumped together in his awkward hurry. She boxed his ears and ran home laughing.

Madame Tulec locked the shutters and followed her daughters upstairs. By ten o'clock the village slept.

Thérèse Ursule lay on her leather bed. Near by stood a shoe she had been working on. It was just her size. She could not help measuring it against her foot. Yes, just her size. "Ah, if I could only wear that and walk like other people." Her thought was formed before she knew it. She was filled with shame immediately. Covetousness—envy—she was, indeed,

more worthless than the worms. She cried out in remorse. All night she begged the Holy Virgin to forgive her. At last she closed her eyes to rest. It was almost dawn.

Birds began to chirp. Their voices echoed and re-echoed against a rocky cliff that rises up beside the town. Bells tinkled, people were getting up; for in Peille the poor people have to walk two hours to reach their fields and two hours home again at night. It is a hard life.

Thérèse Ursule lay listening to these sounds. Her soul was at peace. It was just as though the dear Virgin had stepped down from the walls of the ruined chapel and covered the child with her scarf. Thin streaks of early light came through the cracks of the door and shutters. Suddenly, Thérèse Ursule rubbed her eyes and stared. The streaks of light were forming into patterns, strange meaningless patterns that danced across the floor. An overwhelming desire to trace them filled her soul. She shook and trembled as in a fever. On Madame Tulec's work bench lay a bit of chalk.

Thérèse Ursule stretched out her arms, but she could not reach it. She tried to drag herself along the floor, but failed. Still the patterns formed before her eyes. They must be copied, they would not be denied. "I felt as if a Celestial Being stood there commanding me to write," she said in later years. In desperation, she pricked her finger and with the blood that flowed she traced the mystic signs on the boards. Then, and not until then, did the beams resume their natural slant.

Madame Tulec was angry when she found the stains on her floor. She spoke sharply. These marks were like the Devil's tracks. She got down on her knees and mopped them up.

The next morning the marks were there again. "Something makes me write them. I cannot help myself," Thérèse Ursule protested.

Madame Tulec went to see the priest. He must exorcise this devil, for devil it must surely be. The daughter of a murderer—of course, she was bewitched. In Madame Tulec's mind there was no doubt. Like all the mountain people, she believed in the manifestations of

God and of the Devil. Had not the Immaculate Virgin appeared in person before Colette? She had been pruning grapes on one of the terraces below the town when the dazzling vision rose before her eyes. That, of course, was many years ago, but the chapel built in honour of the vision still stood. It was called Notre-Dame de la Colette and no one doubted the pure miracle to this day. Mass was said there once each year. Tired labourers stopped there to rest and to pray.

Then there was the famous time when it rained for weeks and half Peille went crashing down the mountain side. Just before the tragedy occurred a voice from Heaven had warned the town, so all escaped except one old woman who refused to listen to the Heavenly direction. The Devil too had shown himself on more than one occasion. He had perched himself upon an opened Bible and scourged the Abbé Sextus with a whip of seven thongs. That was written in the annals of the holy man, therefore it must be true. In later years the Evil Spirit had disguised himself in the shape

of a black nanny goat and whoever drank its milk was poisoned. All these stories filled Madame Tulec's head as she crossed the little Place Mont Agel and went through the ancient Porte Lascarès to see the priest.

The Abbé Castel sat in his garden sorting herbs. He was an ardent botanist and spent long hours up in the hills collecting plants to heal the sick. Madame Tulec told him what had happened. She did not want to turn Thérèse Ursule out of doors, but she could not shelter an agent of the Devil.

"At least, she's not a wicked child. She helps me all she can. But I have my daughters to consider. If the news gets about of these bloodstains, where shall I be? No one will send me any work and young Louis Sixte will refuse to marry Madeleine. That would break her heart."

The Abbé Castel listened to the widow seriously. "Give the child a pencil and paper. Save what she writes for me to see. I will call tomorrow morning."

Madame Tulec climbed up the street more

calmly. The priest was a good man, he would help her. There was a tinkle of bells and now and then a snatch of song. The labourers were returning from their fields across the mountains.

V

MADAME TULEC stood in her doorway waiting for the priest. It was a heavy morning. Thick grey clouds pressed down upon the mountain tops. There were few birds singing. The valley was quite full of mist. It made Peille like a floating village, cut off from all earthly intercourse. Dampness trickled in the gutters, dampness issued from dark tunnels, former dungeons of the Comtes of Provence and Lascarès, now stables and storerooms, beloved of bats, rats and other vermin.

Thérèse Ursule looked up at the broad back and spreading hips that blocked the doorway. Strength and determination were expressed in every line of Madame Tulec's figure. She wondered what was going to happen next. Madeleine and Céleste had been sent away the night before. They had gone to Corbio to see some cousins. Instinct told Thérèse Ursule she was the trouble. Madame Tulec too had kept her distance. They feared the Devil that came

each night and forced her to make queer heathenish marks on the floor. But last night he had not come. Thérèse Ursule was glad of that. Madame Tulec had given her a pencil and a sheet of paper. "If you must make marks, make them on this," was all she had said. Before the room was dark Thérèse Ursule had drawn a cross upon the page. Perhaps that had kept the Evil One away, that and her prayers to the Holy Virgin. She hoped they had. She wanted to be a blessing, to injure no one, to think evil of nothing, to be humble, smiling and helpful.

The Abbé Castel came into the room. Beneath his arm he held a parcel. Madame Tulec stood by respectfully.

"Now, look what I have made for you."

He knelt down on the floor beside Thérèse Ursule while she unwrapped the parcel. Inside was a goods box mounted on four wheels and lined with sheepskin. The little girl looked at it wonderingly.

"What is it for?"

"For you to ride in. Here, let me show you."

He picked her up without an effort.

"Oh!" Her eyes were bright with gratitude. She sat there like a little queen.

"Now move." He pushed her to the right, to the left, all about the room, then through the door and into the street. The Rue Central is not a stairway like the other streets. Thérèse Ursule laughed aloud. The Abbé pushed her to the Place Pommes Fleuries, then back again. She had never seen the town before. There were cherries in the grocer's window. Zinc pots hung on a wall near by. Black smoke curled from the baker's grotto where he had built an oven in the rocks. A good smell of warm bread filled the air before his door. Women stood beside the village fountain washing white sheets, pink, purple, yellow and red shirts. They stopped their scrubbing and stared when Thérèse Ursule passed them. A bell rang. It was old Poulbot, now Town Crier. He stopped at every corner and announced that a travelling mattress maker had arrived and was working in the Square Carnot.

The Abbé pushed Thérèse Ursule in the cart to see him. There he stood, a tall sunburned

figure, sewing up a bulging mattress. Already he had two days' work heaped upon a wooden trestle. A lark skimmed through the sky, then disappeared across the roofs. His singing filled the air. Thérèse Ursule gazed round with shining eyes. Her little fingers stroked the thick white sheepskin.

Madame Tulec was driving nails into a hunter's boot. She glanced up and smiled when the priest and the child returned.

"So you like your little cart? Now you can sit in it here, instead of lying on the floor."

He pushed Thérèse Ursule beside the door and stuck two chips beneath the wheels to keep them from rolling downhill. Then he drew a chair up close beside her. Madame Tulec bent over her work. The skies were still grey, but to Thérèse Ursule they were wonderful.

Speaking softly the Abbé Castel told her he had built the cart for her special pleasure. With a little practice she could soon propel herself. That would make her wrists grow stronger and she wanted them strong to help good Madame Tulec in her work. Thérèse Ursule agreed vehemently. He told her she

could go about the town. No longer would she have to lie all day in a dark corner. In the evenings she could go to the Place Pommes Fleuries to watch the setting sun. At midday she could take her work under the plane tree round the corner. And, best of all, each morning she could go to Mass.

Thérèse Ursule sat silent. With these last words she knew her new-found happiness was gone. The priest talked simply, eloquently. He told her of the blessings of the Church. He described the rite of Baptism, how it was prescribed by our Dear Lord centuries ago. He told her of Damnation, the fires of Hell that burn the heretics and unrepentant. Already she was old enough to take Communion. Would she not like to wear a bridal dress and a veil of snowy white and go with Madeleine and Céleste to share the Blessed Supper?

Thérèse Ursule bowed her head to hide her tears. It was her dearest wish.

"Now, my daughter, will you soften your heart and let the Word of the Holy Scriptures enter there? Will you follow the dictates of Him who died to save us all? Will you come

to Church?" He held a golden shining cross before her eyes.

Madame Tulec had stopped working, spell-bound, listening to the priest's soft argument. Thérèse Ursule closed her eyes.

"I cannot come." Her voice was so low that the good man had to stoop to hear it.

The hours passed. He went on talking. Gentle persuasion having failed, he became more violent. She could not refuse the commands of God because of her father's message. That was adding sin to sin. She could not disobey her benefactress. Madame Tulec had rescued her from starving. What were the signs she wrote each night on the floor? Surely they were of the Devil's making. Would she abandon herself to evil domination? A crowd of old men and wrinkled women collected near the door to hear the sermon.

"Take me out. This cart is not for me."

Thérèse Ursule was lifted out and laid once more upon the heap of leather. The priest went off carrying the cart under his arm. Madame Tulec was not pleased. She worked in angry silence.

That evening lightning flashed, thunder rolled, and the rain poured down. A hayrick up above the town was struck and burned. A donkey slipped and broke his knee. A rumour spread round the village that Thérèse Ursule was following in her father's footsteps. These accidents were of her doing. She had given her soul to evil machinations. A group of townsmen called on Madame Tulec. They came at midnight carrying lanterns. Rain dripped from their clothes and beards. Thérèse Ursule must be got rid of. Old Mère Lupez hovered in the darkness. She hated all to do with black Massino. She knew he had bewitched her boy, her darling son Emmanuel. No crime was too great to lay at Thérèse Ursule's door.

"Stone her, burn her, leave her in the hills to starve. Send her to the haunted ruins where she belongs. Let the black souls feed her if she's hungry."

Swollen mountain streams gushed down the precipice. The air was filled with their dull roar. God was showing his displeasure. Madame Tulec braved them all. Thérèse Ursule

prayed to the Virgin. The Abbé Castel heard the shouting. His large black umbrella was blown inside out, a wreck within two minutes. Undaunted, he climbed the hill and sent the people to their homes. This was no time for argument.

As soon as they were gone he turned on Thérèse Ursule, prayed over her, begged her, exhorted her to do his bidding. He was but the mouthpiece of the Lord.

The sky was blue next morning. The hills were wet and black. Rain-drenched poppies lay among the wheat and under the smoke-coloured olive trees. The whole world glistened. Leaves from off the plane trees choked the gutters.

Madame Tulec said her prayers and set about her duties without speaking, her lips compressed with worry. What was she to do? Protect Thérèse Ursule? Oppose the town, even suppress her own conscience? The child was so good in appearance, yet the Devil can appear as a dove, a "wolf in sheep's clothing." The stove lids made an angry clatter. She was

glad when the Abbé appeared before her door. Today he had left the little cart behind.

“Will you help me to the ruined chapel? We can talk quietly there. I have many things to say.” Thérèse Ursule was the first to speak.

The Abbé Castel took her in his arms, climbed the stairway of a street beneath the arching houses, crossed the narrow road, then went up the grass-grown path among the ruins. The wind had blown the blooms from the apple-plum-and-cherry tree that crowned “Tu’s” grave. They were scattered in a thick white carpet on the ground.

Thérèse Ursule lay on the floor of the old chapel. From the walls the painted Virgin, martyrs and sheep still gazed dispassionately. They were her friends. She had come home. Her heart was choked with joy. She thanked the Abbé humbly.

“I have been thinking. There are two things necessary to be a Christian. Belief in Christ and the strength to do His bidding. He bids us to be humble, to love one another, to think no evil, to say no evil, to trust in Him.”

"You leave out one thing, daughter. He bids you join his army which is the Church."

"That would be my final joy. You know my father's last message, dear Abbé. I cannot disregard it. But 'the sins of the fathers are visited on the children.' To be barred Baptism, Communion, the joy of hearing Masses is my punishment. Christ also bids self-denial and I must deny myself of this great comfort. If it is the Devil who forces me to make those heathen tracteries, that is again a punishment. If it is a miracle of God, for which I pray, then some day He will prove it to us all."

Thérèse Ursule begged to be allowed to stay in the chapel. She loved Madame Tulec; she could not cause her pain; her presence in her house produced unhappiness.

"Look, here in the corner is a spring—I have plenty of water."

"Yes, Thérèse Ursule, but I cannot leave you here alone. At night it is cold."

"The Virgin will wrap me in her scarf."

"The animals, foxes, wild boar, giant lizards, serpents—anything may be hiding in these old ruins."

"They are my friends."

"What will you do for food?"

"Christ tells us to trust in Him."

The good man could not stand against her arguments. Such faith compels obedience. He returned to the village alone.

Thérèse Ursule lay in the chapel doorway. The sun began to set. Once more white butterflies hovered near her and tiny rabbits pressed against her side. The perfume of wild strawberries filled the air. The shadows lengthened. The mountains stretched, range after range, in purple grandeur. She sang gently to herself.

A tattered beggar climbed with bowed head to the ruined chapel. When Thérèse Ursule spoke, he started with surprise and looked at her suspiciously. His breath was strong with liquor. When he saw the wild things crouched against the child he crossed himself.

"Who are you?"

"Thérèse Ursule Corbeille. I was born here. This is my home. There is a spring if you are thirsty and there, next the wall, are the finest wild strawberries in Peille."

The man gathered the strawberries. He

found onions too not far away, the remains of a bed that Massino had planted. Dragging herself across the floor, Thérèse Ursule unearthed an iron pot. She scrubbed it with sand and wiped it out with olive leaves. The man lighted a fire. The smell of the onions mingled with wild herbs was good.

Madame Tulec could not rest for thinking of the child alone upon the mountain. Braving all supernatural dangers, she wrapped her head in a woollen scarf and went to bring her back. She stopped in horror when she heard the voices and saw the figure of the beggar beside the fire. Many women might have fled in terror, but not Madame Tulec. Advancing to the chapel door she asked Thérèse Ursule the reason for her strange companion.

"It is my brother, come to me for shelter."
' Madame Tulec disapproved entirely, but her strong will was powerless against Thérèse Ursule's convictions. She finally left them in annoyance, though deep within her glowed a spark of admiration.

Mère Lupez, watching from her window, saw the beggar's fire. She knew Thérèse Ursule

was there, but how explain that moving figure? She called to several neighbours.

“It is a man, you see? The Devil without a doubt.” They crossed themselves. “Look at his matted beard against the firelight. Now you’ll believe me when I say the brat’s a witch.”

“Surely this child is an angel or some holy saint come down to earth,” the beggar thought. He laid himself upon the ground and prayed for the first time in many years. Thérèse Ursule watched the stars twinkling in the heavens. A nightingale sang in the valley. The moon rose. It bathed the world in glory.

VI

THE beggar's name was Barras. He left the following day at sunrise, first gathering onions, herbs and wild strawberries for Thérèse Ursule.

"I thank you kindly for your talk and hospitality." No courtier could have made a finer bow. "We poor wanderers think too seldom of religion. I shall not forget your sayings."

He went off down the road towards Nice. His words made Thérèse Ursule very happy. What joy to shelter the homeless. Perhaps some day a Holy pilgrim might come her way. But who was she to be so blessed?

June passed. Beggars, gipsies, all who asked found shelter in the ruined chapel. It was a scandal in the town. Such goings on. Madame Tulec had been right to send the girl away. Strange men sleeping up there with her alone. Much more was said. Threats were made. Thérèse Ursule did not seem to mind. No amount of talk can hurt a happiness sustained by strength of character and virtue. She

sang all day. The Abbé Castel and Madame Tulec remained her friends and took her part in every argument against her. Privately they scolded her for sheltering all the riff-raff of the world.

"But Madame Tulec, if I lock my heart against all those poor sad people, how will the love of God be able to get in?"

Madame Tulec shook her head. "There are many things one doesn't understand," she said. "You are young. To be alone with thieves and beggars is not right. Everyone knows that."

"I'd rather lose the town's good opinion than the Blessed Virgin Mary's."

"Leave her alone. She is a natural. We can only try to help her with prayers and instruction. You never know, her future may be glorious," was the Abbé Castel's advice.

Lacking instruction, Madame Tulec provided work. No one could shape a shoe more delicately than Thérèse Ursule, and with the money Madame Tulec paid her she helped the poor. Nobody left her empty-handed. Ten sous for olives, five centimes for a bit of bread, money for a glass of wine; they all needed

something. Often she went without food herself. When Madame Tulec heard this she really lost her temper.

"Ah, they pass along the road so quickly. I must do what I can without waiting. As for me, I shall be here tomorrow, next week, next month, next year. There's plenty of time for me to attend to my wants later."

In July the mystic signs of light returned. Once more Thérèse Ursule felt impelled to write. She prayed to the Blessed Virgin, called on the Saints—but all to no avail. Wherever she turned her head, bars of light danced against the darkness. She could not keep her fingers still. They longed to copy out the strange figures. For one whole night they shone beneath her eyelids. Near dawn a presence seemed to fill the room. A voice of thunder commanded her to write. She opened her eyes, terrified. A black-clad figure crouched off in one corner—or was it only a shadow of the early morning? She rubbed her eyes and looked again. A great hush enveloped the mountains.

A bit of chalk which she used for marking leather lay close by.

“O Lord, I pray it is Thy will and Thine alone.”

Below the painting of the Holy Virgin a beggar had built an altar. It was always gay with leaves and flowers.

Thérèse Ursule, her fingers trembling, picked up the chalk. With desperate haste she copied the hieroglyphics on the altar, rubbing out, correcting as she wrote. It was a long work. At last she sank on to the ground exhausted. The sun rose and every bird in Peille burst into song. The valley rang with their clear high music.

The Abbé Castel was on his way into the mountains for herbs. Through the doorway he saw Thérèse Ursule lying so still, so limp, that he thought her dead. He tiptoed to her side. She opened her eyes and murmured, “I have written”; then fell asleep again. On the altar he saw the chalk marks. “Poor girl, I don’t believe an evil spirit can command her.” The half-witted often had crazes. This so-called writing was doubtless an example.

Outside bees were humming in the gorse. Fat pink roses sagged beneath the blazing sun. Up from the valley came the ringing of a farmer whetting his scythe. The Abbé Castel wiped his forehead on a blue cotton handkerchief, then dipped it in the spring and placed it folded in his hat. He had a long hot climb before him. As soon as he was out of sight all the little animals of the fields crept to the chapel door. They nestled in the cool shadows.

The Abbé, climbing in the brazen glare, pitied the poor labourers sweating in the fields and ditches, pitied himself. Ah yes, today was good for lizards. He shook his head. The mountains were like brown rolls, hot from the oven. Even the birds had sought shelter.

In Monte Carlo the beach was gay with coloured parasols. Lines of bathers lay half-naked in the sunshine. The sea was smooth and calm, an azure blue.

Thérèse Ursule slept peacefully.

VII

IT WAS the day of the Baguette in Peille, a festival that takes place each year on the eighth of September. Flags are waved, gay dresses are worn, and the Host is carried through the streets. The girls are all in white with floating veils. On this day lovers declare themselves as lovers. They form a great circle in the Place Pommes Fleuries. The girls carry olive branches, decorated with flowers and bright ribbons. These branches are the Baguettes. Grandparents, parents, bachelors and old maids stand round to watch the ceremony. First, everybody sings the story of the Baguette; of Gioanni the leader of the village five hundred years ago. Those were the days of Peille's greatness. Now there are about fifty goats to go into the mountains, but then a flock of six hundred left the village each morning. Gioanni drove them. At dawn he stood on the precipice and blew three blasts on a conch shell—the first blast for the waiting, the second for

the inattentive and the third for the deaf. Beside him were his faithful dogs, Dragoun and Matagoun. Pointed nails stuck from their collars to protect them from the wolves that ranged the mountains. Hot weather, cold weather, rain or sun, this cavalcade set out. Gioanni was the hero of the town. He had black hair, white teeth, and strong brown arms. All the girls of Peille loved him except one, Rosetta. She was the darling of his heart, but she only laughed and turned her back when he approached her.

Then came the thirty days and nights of rain when half Peille caved in. And in the great avalanche the beautiful mountain stream was buried. It was the only source of water for the town. The people walked with parched throats and frightened eyes. They all collected on the mountain side weeping and imploring the holy St. Symphorien, their patron saint, to help them. But the hills remained dry, the wild sage crackled in the wind and the trees drooped. Then Rosetta broke off an olive branch. She held it high above her head.

"Gioanni guards our flocks. He is the leader

of the village. Let him take this branch and tell us where to dig for water. I will be his if he finds a spring."

Shaking with emotion the young man took the forked branch in both hands. The people watched him, silent, breathless. The twig turned.

"It is here! Dig here for water!"

And all the men from sixteen to sixty took turns at digging. So life was restored to Peille and so the fête of the Baguette was started.

After this story has been sung the priest blesses the fountain—the water Gioanni found which supplies the town to this day. Then the girls hand their Baguettes to the men they love and the dancing begins.

Thérèse Ursule heard the singing in the square and saw the glow of the bonfires, but she knew there were many heavy hearts, for all the sound young men were far off fighting. It was the second month of the great war. Only three couples stood round the blaze. Lame François Truché, deaf Louis Barelli and Ange Levamis with the withered hand.

Madeleine Tulec had sent her Baguette care-

fully packed in a cardboard box to Louis Sixte Gioanni. Thérèse Ursule had helped her pack it. She had tried to dry poor Madeleine's tears. Gone were the starry evenings when she and Louis Sixte could stroll among the shadows. No use now for her to climb the path towards Ste. Agnes to meet him at sunset.

"I always knew him, even at the greatest distance. And now he's off fighting the enemy. Who are the Germans anyhow? Why will they be so wicked?"

Thérèse Ursule could not reply. She was sad too. Her friend the Abbé Castel had gone to the front as well. An old man had taken his place as Curé of the village, a cranky old man who never came near her, who never climbed the hills in search of herbs, who, when he was not in the Church, spent his time wiping his thick steel-rimmed spectacles on the edge of his cassock and reading from big learned books.

The sound of singing and laughter came up to the chapel. The stars twinkled, field mice scuttled to and fro, leaves rustled in the breeze, and meadow scents mixed with the acrid smell

of burning faggots. All just as though the world were at peace.

Thérèse Ursule suddenly heard a faint bleating. It sounded as though it came from the sky. She listened. There it was again, a frightened pitiful bleating.

The Place Pommes Fleuries was filled with people dancing. The bonfire made it as bright as day. Japanese lanterns were hung in the trees. At one side stood a long table covered with a white cloth. On it were wines, cakes, olives, hams and many other good things. A band sat on a rickety platform. Old men were trying to be young men. Empty bottles lay heaped in a corner.

Mère Lupez burst in upon this scene. She had been up in the hills all day as usual. Her children were gone; the fête meant nothing to her. Her working dress was torn, her grey hair straggled round her neck.

"My goat is lost. Will someone help me?"

No one answered.

"He's caught on the top of St. Pancrace's Cliff! Can't you hear him crying?"

The women tried to quiet her. Of course,

no one could climb St. Pancrace's Cliff from this side. She must be mad. You had to cross the mountains and climb the other side—a twelve hours' walk. In the morning someone might help her. Why did she let the creature wander off so high? They handed her a glass of wine. The fiddles struck up a fresh tune, the old men sang and stamped their feet. One grabbed Mère Lupez and tried to make her dance. She jerked her hand away.

"Stop that, you old fool! Keep off, before I brain the lot of you! May Satan loose his bands—ah, look—look! What's that?" Her cracked voice died in her throat.

She pointed to a spot of luminous mist against St. Pancrace's Cliff. It was moving slowly down the face of the great rock towards the road. A stone clattered down the precipice and crashed through the tops of the olive trees five hundred feet below. The dancing and music and shouting stopped. A deathly silence filled the square.

There was the sound of walking, a slow, light walking. They heard it first across the gorge, then on the bridge. Then the steps

turned down the rocky road towards the Place Pommes Fleuries. Candles guttered in the wind. A dog whimpered and crept close to his master. The hair round his neck stood out in bristles. The steps came nearer and nearer. A pale figure turned the bend in the road.

"Tell us, are you human or a spirit?" Poulbot tried to be defiant.

The slender form approached them, holding in its arms a tiny kid.

"It's the Holy Jesus, the shepherd of us all," murmured a frightened voice. Afterwards people swore they had seen a halo glowing in the dark.

It was Thérèse Ursule, Thérèse Ursule Corbeille, the useless cripple.

"Here is your little goat, Madame Lupez. I couldn't bear to hear it crying."

The peasants looked at her in amazement.

"How ever did you get up there?"

"The Holy Virgin led me." She smiled, laid the kid on the ground and walked away.

Mère Lupez leaned over and touched the little animal to see if it was real. Someone whispered, "It's a miracle, that's what it is."

They were all frightened. Where had Thérèse Ursule gone? Was she back in the haunted chapel? Perhaps she had never been a cripple. They spoke in whispers. No one felt like dancing any more. In twenty minutes the square was empty. Children slept in the beds with their parents that night.

A rising wind stirred the embers of the bonfire. Its flickering flame lighted up the table, the empty bottles, the hunks of cheese, ham and bread. Grey rats crept in the shadows of the square, squeaking and fighting over what was left.

Thérèse Ursule spent the night in prayer. The painted martyrs, saints and Virgin gazed calmly down at her kneeling figure. What were miracles to them? Their eyes had watched the centuries sweep past, had seen the marvels of the Lord.

VIII

No ONE went to work the next morning. Men stood in groups below St. Pancrace's Cliff. Surely no human being could have found a foothold there. Some said it must be the work of God. His miracles were not so uncommon. He did not want the goat to die, that was all. Others believed Thérèse Ursule rode the Devil's horse. How could she be a child of God? She had never been to Mass, she was not even christened.

The Abbé joined them. His cook had told him the whole story, but so many things occurred after fête days that he had not paid much attention to her. At early Mass several people had spoken to him about it, so he began to think there might be some truth in what they were saying. He listened quietly while Monsieur Suluson described every detail. Then he asked if anybody had been up to see Thérèse Ursule. They hummed and hawed and said something about wanting to look at the

cliff by daylight to make sure nobody could climb it. The Abbé snorted scornfully. They were frightened, that's what they were. He tucked up his cassock to avoid tripping and stumped towards the ruins.

In the Place Pommes Fleuries women were busy washing plates and clearing away the chairs. They could talk of nothing but last night's miracle.

"They say the goat's turned all black and swollen to twice its size."

"Mère Lupez thinks she cast a spell over it."

"If that is so, why did she drive it into the hills as usual?"

"Oh, no, she left it in its shed today."

"But I saw her drive it past my door."

Glasses rattled, black smoke rose from the baker's chimney, and the water fell in a steady splash from Gioanni's fountain.

Céleste, Madeleine and Madame Tulec were with Thérèse Ursule. They had found the ruined chapel banked with flowers. Red, yellow, white, pink, and many shades of blue flowers. The trees round the door were filled

with birds and the mist upon the distant peaks shone silver. Thérèse Ursule's eyes were like stars, her lips were smiling, her hands were clasped in ecstasy.

"For this night I have seen the wonder of Our Saviour. Trees laden with ripe fruit were above Him, wild flowers made a carpet for His feet, yellow grain stretched far into the distance. There were streams of clear cold water. Music filled the air. All the creatures of the plains and hills were unafraid. And as I watched the poor, the sad, the lame and the blind crowded towards Him. He sat on a throne of blue, transparent like the sky. His eyes were gay. He held out His hands to me. I begged Him to let me touch the marks left by the cruel cross upon His palms. He gave them to me. I have never been so happy."

The women listened spellbound, crossing themselves devoutly. It was a marvel. Thérèse Ursule Corbeille, the little waif, was holy. She showed them the red marks in her palms. They wanted to call all Peille to see these signs of Heaven.

"Glory has come to Peille, Father."

The Abbé Brunoy wiped his spectacles and grunted. He was out of breath. Madeleine placed an empty box for him to sit on.

"Now, Thérèse, begin at the beginning. Tell the Abbé all about it. I love to hear you."

Thérèse Ursule told how she had been listening to the music when she first heard the kid bleating. She longed to help it. She prayed to the Virgin—"and as I was praying I saw Her step off that wall. She took my hand. My legs and feet were filled with strength. She led me to the top of St. Pancrace's Cliff and guided me down again."

The old man frowned incredulously. Thérèse Ursule described her vision of Heaven. "And when dawn lit up my room I found it filled with flowers."

The priest was at a loss. How could such miracles occur? He had to doubt them. This girl had never been to Church and, what was more, she refused to go. Why should she be granted special favours? If she was lying, then he ought to blame her. He was an old scholar,

fond of solitude. What could he do? What should he say? It was a problem.

He came into the chapel to smell the flowers and see the frescoes.

“What are these marks on the altar, my child?”

Thérèse Ursule blushed. “I don’t know. Some power made me write them. I couldn’t help it.”

“Have you a candle?” The Abbé bent his head to see. His eyes were dimmed by years of reading.

Madame Tulec lighted a bunch of dry twigs and held it near the altar. Her conscience pricked her for ever having doubted Thérèse Ursule.

“If there is evil in those marks, then it’s the only evil that was ever in this poor child. After all, everything in the world—people, cattle, even flowers—has to get rid of what is putrid in it.” She could not bear the idea of any fault in Thérèse Ursule now. “There, Madeleine, hold the flame nearer. Be careful of the Abbé’s gown. Of course, those scratchings aren’t real writing, Father.”

"Stop talking. Get me a pen and paper."

Céleste ran down to the Abbé's house. She told everybody she saw what was happening on the hill. When she returned they followed her shyly, peeping over the broken walls, standing knee-deep in the grass. They were afraid to come too near. The Abbé copied down the marks, now bending close to see, then sitting back on his heels in astonishment. At last he finished.

"You wrote these things yourself, my daughter?"

Thérèse Ursule nodded.

"Nobody guided your fingers? I know you often have strange visitors."

"I wrote them all myself, Father. Please tell me what they are."

"The words are Arabic and I can't tell you what they mean, but I know someone who may be able to translate them."

Some of the people followed the Abbé to his house, some waited near the chapel wondering if another miracle would happen. Others gazed stolidly at St. Pancrace's Cliff.

Thérèse Ursule took up her work. Madame Tulec stopped her.

“Don’t finish those shoes now, Thérèse. Today you must make a pair for yourself, praise God!”

IX

THE Abbé sent the mystic script to Lyon. Meanwhile two factions filled the town of Peille; those who were for Thérèse Ursule and those who were against her. Many found it hard to overlook the past. They still believed the spirit of Massino hovered round the ruins.

The fifteenth of October is the day of Ste. Thérèse of Avila. On that day all those who loved Thérèse Ursule marched up the hill, carrying banners and singing. Red berries hung in clusters on the bushes. Dead leaves fluttered in the autumn breeze. The mountains to the north of Peille were white with snow. Soon the swallows would be leaving for the south.

Monsieur Suluson acted as spokesman. "We know you like this place, Thérèse Ursule, but winter will soon be here. You haven't got a stick of furniture—not even a bed to sleep on or covers to keep you warm. Now, we think

that if each one of us took something from our homes we could make you comfortable."

Thérèse Ursule's eyes shone through tears of gratitude. Not one among that crowd owned a chair too many, yet they offered what they had to her. The bare tree on "Tu's" grave cast a long thin shadow. A pheasant whistled in the autumn grass.

"Thank you. I don't know how to answer. You see, I've never had all those things, so I don't miss them. If I don't miss them, I can't need them and it would be wrong for me to take what I don't need. Please don't think me ungrateful."

They all protested. She had gone too long without the necessities of life.

"Tell me, does a traveller build a house every night along the road? Does an exile use his money or his influence in the country of his exile, or does he use them in an effort to get home?"

They all agreed he used them to get home.

"Then we think alike. Heaven is our real country. We must imitate the travellers and the exiles, using our fortunes and our energies

to reach the loving home that is waiting for us. Look at that light shining there. Madame Lupez puts it in her window every night to guide Emmanuel. So the Blessed Virgin puts thoughts in our heads to keep us from wandering in the dark, stumbling over useless things. But what is useless to one person may be essential to somebody else."

For a moment no one spoke. At last one old man sighed deeply. "She's right, the girl is right. My grandchildren need the chair I had for her, I can't deny it."

"I'm glad to hear you say that." Thérèse Ursule shook his hand. "Now do me a favour, all of you. Let's cook supper up here and spend the evening together. I've plenty of onions, potatoes and herbs. We can tell stories and sing. Madeleine Tulec has a lovely voice."

Some gathered dry sticks, others dug potatoes. Gaspard Barelli fetched his concertina. The pot simmered and sent out a pleasant smell of cooking. Madame Tulec stirred it while old Isnardi told them stories of Provence—"When Christ gave the boy a whistle," "The Fourth Woman," "The Stingy Oil Merchant" and

many others. They ate and sang and laughed. The moon shone brightly. Gaspard Barelli played "Rose of May" on his concertina and Madeleine Tulec sang the verses. Everybody joined in the chorus. The music echoed through the mountains. At last, the evening was over. They stamped out the fire and went home, still singing.

"Friends are indeed a comfort."

Thérèse Ursule could not thank the Lord enough. She begged to be sent some task to prove her great appreciation. Suddenly, as if in answer to her prayer, a dark form filled the door, hesitated a moment, then stooped above the spring and drank thirstily.

"Who are you?"

The figure started and threw up its hands.

"Do not be frightened. Tell me who you are?"

A man's voice answered. His speech was thick. Thérèse Ursule could scarcely understand him.

"Do you want food? Some of the stew we ate tonight is left. I can soon heat it again."

She lighted a match. He struck it out of her hand.

"Put that out. I can't have any light where I am."

"Why not? You needn't be afraid of me. I won't hurt you."

By the clear moonlight she saw that he was very young. His clothes were torn and his arms were scratched and bleeding.

"Why, you're just a boy. You can't be twenty years old."

"No, nineteen—nineteen last May, Made-moiselle, but I feel a lot older than that now. You don't know yet."

The boy buried his face in his hands and wept.

X

THÉRÈSE URSULE was up by dawn next morning. The boy slept heavily. His face was pale, there were blue circles beneath his eyes. His head must have been shaved, though now the hair was growing out again. It stood up in little bristles, gleaming gold in the early sunlight. Lying there limply he looked younger than ever. So this was one of the terrible Germans against whom France was fighting. This blond tired boy. Surely, there must be some mistake. He could not be a savage. She took up her work. The hours passed. The boy slept on. At eleven o'clock she ate her lunch, then set to work again. The afternoon was warm. A lizard crept out into a patch of sun. The peasants began returning from their fields. The Church bell rang. The boy turned over, yawned, then opened his eyes sleepily.

"What time is it?"

"Five o'clock. The bell is ringing for Vespers now."

His eyes followed Thérèse Ursule as she filled a plate with stew and brought it to him.

"You must be hungry."

"Thank you." He ate greedily. She sat down to her work again.

"What are you doing?"

"I am making a pair of shoes for Madame Tulec."

"Why do you live here alone?"

"It's my home. I was born here. My father lived here too until he left."

"Then he is a soldier, I suppose, at the front?"

"No."

For a moment only the sound of his spoon against the tin plate broke the silence. A chilly breeze rustled the dead grass and filled the air with the scent of mountain sage and gorse.

When he had finished his meal, the boy washed his plate in the stream from the spring and came and sat beside Thérèse Ursule. He told her that his name was Kurt Bergner and that he had escaped from a German prison camp near Nice.

"Why did you do that?"

"I don't know. I saw a chance, so I ran away. I want to go home. I must know what is happening to them there."

The swallows darted in smooth circles above their heads. Kurt lay on his back and watched them. Then he began talking, almost as though he were talking to himself.

"I was born in a flat country, in a village called Greifenberg. I never saw mountains until I came to France. Greifenberg is awfully cold in winter. Sometimes the snow is ten feet deep. It must be cold there already. My father is the schoolmaster. He taught me French. I have three little brothers and two sisters, all younger than me. My sisters are Louise and Elsa. We call Louise 'Leischen.' She was going to be married this year, but her fiancé was killed early in August. That was before I left home. She was very sad. His name was Hans Konried. He was twenty-four and a very good doctor. I expect they think I'm dead too."

He described the pine forests that stretch for miles and miles; the fields of grain; the little river that ran near his home. Fat white

geese waddled up and down the banks quacking. Each winter they seemed astonished to find the water gone. Once, years ago, he and a friend had broken a great hole for them to swim in. The ice was very thick. Next morning they found the geese frozen in the pond.

"The miller was very angry and made Father pay six marks, so he was angry too, and the geese were dead. My friend and I had thought we were doing a kind action."

There was a mill beside the stream where all the farmers brought their wheat. In summer Kurt and his friends used to swim and fish in the mill pond. In winter they went there to skate.

"That was a long time ago. I was only a boy. This September I was going to the University at Leipzig. My father coached me all last year for the examinations." He shook his head sadly. "War is indeed a great interrupter."

It had grown quite dark without either of them noticing it. Kurt went to collect some dried sticks to build up the fire. He was not afraid of a light now. No one seemed to come

that way and Thérèse Ursule had promised she would not give him up. All who passed were welcome to whatever sanctuary she could offer.

While she was thinking of the things he had told her, Madeleine Tulec arrived. In her hand she held a letter. It was from Louis Sixte Gioanni. He was coming home on leave at Christmas. They would be married then. Madeleine was very happy.

"And, Thérèse Ursule, you'll come to my wedding, won't you? Not to the Church, I know you won't do that, but to the house afterwards. We're going to clear out all the leather in the downstairs room and hang up paper lanterns. My uncle from Ste. Agnès will bring his cornet and old Gaspard will play his concertina. It will be very gay. Mother says you'll make my wedding slippers and—what's this?"

Kurt's coat was lying near them. Madeleine picked it up.

"Thérèse, this is a German prisoner's coat. I know it is. We pass a prison camp each time we go to market. How did you get it?" Her voice was sunk in horror. She turned the coat

over and over as though it might bite her. "Thérèse, he's not hiding here? You wouldn't shield a German?"

"All men are my brothers. Even the fiercest cannibals are made in the likeness of Our Lord in Heaven."

Madeleine dropped the coat and wrung her hands. She knew no pleas nor threats could move Thérèse Ursule. Returning with the faggots, Kurt heard their voices. He put down his load with care and hid himself in the shadows.

"No, Madeleine, each one of us must act as we think best. Who am I to call this man a criminal? Nothing could be gentler than his manner here."

"Yes, but on the battlefields it's another matter. They're killing our men, murdering women and children, burning houses ——"

"Don't tell me. I can't listen to such tales ——" Thérèse Ursule stopped her ears in horror. "Hate is so easy, Madeleine. We only have to attack to hate, believe me. Last year the ivy threatened to destroy my garden—you remember. I tried to pull it up. Suddenly I found myself trembling with fury at that poor

plant. That was a lesson to me. If a human being can be stirred to hatred by ivy, then what can the clash of armies not produce?"

"So you would sit back and let a foreign power rule over you?"

"I do not know a king or president. I've never even seen one. I only recognise God as my ruler. He teaches humility. He tells us if a man wants our possessions to give them to him. What are all these things people cling to? Clothes, cattle, land, houses, countries. No one can use them more than a life time and what is a life time in all eternity?"

They faced each other, Madeleine pale with anger. Frogs croaked in the stream below the village. Kurt buried his face in the grass. His flight was to begin again, he knew it. The stars shone out, clear silver against the black sky.

Madame Tulec called Madeleine. Her voice was piercing and alarmed. She came running up the steep slope; stout, sedate Madame Tulec. A bit of paper fluttered in her hand. She threw her arms round Madeleine. Louis Sixte Gio-anni was dead, killed in action.

Madeleine closed her eyes, her fists clenched,

her body rigid. Her Louis dead, her Louis Sixte Gioanni, killed by the enemy. Her darling gone from her for ever. Just when he was coming home. Just when they were to be married. A German had done this to her. A German lay hiding near her now. Her world was ended. His should be too. She screamed.

"There's a German here! Catch him! Thérèse Ursule Corbeille's hiding him—the traitor! Come on, run! O God, let me find him!"

There was the sound of scrambling footsteps up the hillside. Kurt Bergner ran like a hunted fox. Dogs barked, doors slammed, men shouted to each other, torches flared. The chase was on.

These were the kind people who had come to wish Thérèse Ursule joy not thirty hours ago. Those that spoke to her now spoke in anger. Their words were like blows. She sank to her knees before the picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary and prayed for strength and guidance. That is how the soldiers found her at dawn when they took her off to prison. She went with them humbly. They were not gentle. The people of Peille looked on silently as

Thérèse Ursule climbed into the closed van. Men with fixed bayonets sat on each side of her.

“Please tell me. Have they caught the German boy?”

“What’s that to you?” The men laughed.

Thérèse Ursule sat in silence after that. She was not afraid. Had not the great St. Thérèse of Avila spent months in prison? And what were any of their sufferings compared to Christ’s agony upon the Cross?

The heavy vehicle creaked slowly down the winding road to Nice. Thérèse Ursule was locked into a tiny cell. The walls were stone, the door of steel, and the single window, high up above her head, was double barred. She was a dangerous prisoner.

That afternoon two paragraphs were published in the Paris papers:

A French woman living in the mountains above Nice has been arrested for harbouring an escaped German prisoner.

The authorities believe that in her they have secured a clue to a vast network of German espionage that exists in the South of France. Other arrests

are expected to follow. It is hoped that these people will be summarily dealt with as they deserve.

The other paragraph was not about the war:

M. Paul Desfestins, a Professor of Oriental Languages in Lyon, writes that three weeks ago he received a letter from a Catholic priest in Peille, a village in Provence, containing a document in Arabic, claimed to have been written by an uneducated mountain girl. The document contains the exact specifications of an ancient monastery that formerly existed in Peille.

Professor Desfestins goes on to say that this monastery was founded by the Abbé Sextus, a Saracen soldier converted to Christianity after a massacre of Christians in the second century.

XI

Not far from the gay curving sea-front of Nice is a network of narrow dark streets and dilapidated houses called the Old Town. Here there are miserable lodging houses, dark little damp shops, dogs, cats, men, women and poverty. By day laughter, quarrels, shouts and creaking carts make a busy noise. Black eyes peep mysteriously through half-opened green shutters. Laundry is draped across narrow alleys—red, blue, green and purple laundry—and on the tops of the tall sagging houses clumps of daisies and forget-me-nots grow between the moss covered tiles. By night the Old Town is quiet and dark; even the street lights seem unable to penetrate the deep shadows.

For three days Lilly Field had listened to the noise and for three nights to the silence. Now she could distinguish no difference between them, for only a single step separated her from death. The hours passed and she lay without moving, her eyes closed, gasping for

breath. Her body made scarcely a mound beneath the blanket. There were no sheets.

So this was the end. Vague pictures of her youth in England floated through her mind. Carrying her father's lunch pail to the factory; a hissing gander down near the railway station; black dust in dry weather, black mud when it rained. Her brothers and sisters and the baby. There was always a baby in her mother's arms. Lilly could not remember her without a baby.

Then, domestic service in Manchester; washing plates and kissing Hal the chauffeur, his hair waving yellow and his muscles tight like india rubber. Then the night she had pinched five shillings from the Mistress. She had to have that money to buy a hat. Hal was going to take her out on Sunday. When her baby died she came to France as a nursemaid. All so long ago, so long ago. She had been in gaol three times since then, twice in Paris and once in Nice, once in Paris, twice in Nice—which was it? Black clouds seemed to envelop her; the bed was giving way; she was slipping through the mattress. If she could only reach that bottle of medicine . . . but it was so far

away. And what was that moaning noise? Surely, no one else was in the room. Gathering all her strength she called desperately on the Lord.

Thérèse Ursule lay sleeping and as she slept she dreamt a hand touched her on the shoulder and a voice said "Come." She walked along the prison corridors and past the guards. No one tried to stop her. The cool night air fanned her cheeks. It was good after the close stench of her cell. She moved rapidly through many streets, then up a flight of stairs. At the top stood a battered door. She pushed it open. The room inside was hot and smelled of fever. There was one small window. Thérèse Ursule opened it; then she noticed that a naked woman lay upon a dirty bed. Her legs were thin and wet with sweat and her large eyes stared out blindly. A spoon, a bottle and a cracked cup were on a chair beside the bed. Thérèse Ursule poured out a dose of medicine and held it to the woman's parched lips.

"If it is God's will that you die, then you shall die. If it is God's will that you live, then you shall live."

The woman drank the dose and closed her eyes. There was a gas ring in one corner. A tin jug and basin stood on a small table. Thérèse Ursule took the jug and went down the stairs to a landing where a tap was dripping. She filled the jug with water, heated it on the gas ring, then washed the invalid. The woman lay quietly now. Her eyes seemed to have regained consciousness and her breathing was more regular. After a while she went to sleep. Thérèse Ursule watched over her. The room turned grey with dawn. The door opened and an elderly woman with tousled hair came in. She leaned over the bed.

Thérèse Ursule found herself skimming through the streets again. Somewhere a clock struck five. Water carts were sprinkling an open square. Early risers' footsteps echoed in the stillness. A shutter slammed. A key grated in a lock. It grated and grated; the door shook. The vibration seemed to reach Thérèse Ursule. She felt she was being shaken too. She heard a voice calling. Something grasped her by the shoulder. There was a rush of air in her ears. She opened her eyes. The

prison matron bent over her. The walls of her cell enclosed her. High up above her head the grey morning light came through the small barred window.

"Nobody can say you don't sleep, my girl."

Thérèse Ursule rubbed her eyes and looked around confusedly.

"Is the poor woman better?"

"Poor woman? Who're you talking about?"

"The sick woman I've been with all night."

"There's no sick woman here."

"I must have been dreaming."

"Well, wake up now. I've got orders to send you to the Colonel's office."

Thérèse Ursule went under guard to see the Colonel. She stood before his desk. There were several other officers in the room. They all stared at her. The Colonel had a long white beard. His boots shone. The left one pinched him slightly. He wondered if a shoe tree would overcome the trouble or if he should have to return it to the maker. Clearing his throat he asked her if her name was Thérèse Ursule Corbeille.

"Yes."

"Say 'Sir' to me."

"Yes, sir."

"Charged with aiding and abetting a German prisoner to escape?"

"Yes, sir."

"So you admit it, do you? Aren't you ashamed? Don't you know that he was an enemy of France? An enemy of your country?"

"No, sir."

The Colonel glared. "What do you mean by 'no sir'?"

"Heaven is my country. Was he an enemy of God?"

The Colonel puffed out his chest and rustled the papers on his desk. The younger officers looked serious. There was no use in talking to this poor half-witted girl.

"Well, young woman. People are shot for what you did. Try to get that into your head." He leaned towards her. "Soldiers stand up with guns and shoot and you drop down dead. You don't want to die, do you?"

"If it's God will, sir. Why should I want to tarry on my way to Him?"

The guards each side of Thérèse Ursule stood with wooden faces. Not even their eyes betrayed the laughter within them. The Colonel whispered to a stoutish man beside him. Dr. Cartaret agreed the girl was obviously simple, crazy on the subject of religion. He read again the letters from the Abbé Castel and also the Abbé Brunoy. Of course, this business of the psychic writing must be taken with a grain of salt. And her childhood lameness was undoubtedly a nervous affliction. There were many such examples in the annals of medicine. Now that they had found someone to care for her and keep her out of mischief she ought to be all right. Their voices buzzed. The Colonel shifted his foot constantly. That left boot really was most painful. The quicker he could dispose of this case the better.

Turning once more to Thérèse Ursule, he told her that her friends the Abbé Castel, now serving at the front, and the Abbé Brunoy had interceded for her. A friend of hers in Peille had guaranteed to care for her, so they were going to let her go.

“But remember, you’ve had a narrow shave.

If you do anything wrong again, you'll not get off so easily."

The door opened and old Mère Lupez came in. She stood gauntly in the room and swore to give Thérèse Ursule a home.

"I've known her since the day she was born. She's always been simple-minded. Her father was a fool before her, going off with a gipsy woman, and living ——"

"Never mind all that, old lady. We are busy here. You promise to keep this girl out of mischief?"

"I do, sir."

She made her mark upon a paper. Thérèse Ursule followed her from the room. Outside the door Mère Lupez had left two baskets. She took one and Thérèse Ursule picked up the other. They walked on for some distance in silence. Then Mère Lupez turned round.

"I believe in tit-for-tat. You saved my goat, that's why I came to help you now. You needn't thank me. All I ask you is to keep out of my way. Once back in Peille, I do not even want to see you. Now wait here until I come back."

She strode off towards the market. Thérèse Ursule waited. The sun was hot. The streets were crowded. She took shelter in a doorway. The place seemed curiously familiar. That rickety red-tiled stairway. That damp spot on the plaster. That dripping tap. Those rusty nails on which spiders hung their webs. She had seen them all before. As she wondered, an elderly woman with tousled hair came in and started up the stairs laboriously.

A voice called from above "Good day, Madame Roselli, how's your patient?"

"A bit easier this morning, though her mind's still wandering. Says an angel came and nursed her in the night."

The woman laughed. A door shut. The stairs were silent once more.

XII

IT WAS dark before Thérèse Ursule and Mère Lupez reached Peille. They walked all the way. The chill mountain air was refreshing after the heat of Nice.

When they came to the steps leading up to the monastery, the old woman handed Thérèse Ursule a hunk of bread.

"Now I've done with you. Don't thank me, don't speak to me. You belong up there." Then she turned her back and went down to the town. A few minutes later her light appeared in her window as usual. So Peille knew that Thérèse Ursule was back once more.

Oh, the joy of being home again! Thérèse Ursule dipped her fingers in the cool spring. The flowers on her altar were dry and withered. She lay beneath the stars and her heart ached for all those poor people locked in prison, for all those poor people herded into airless streets and dirty rooms. Who was she to be so favoured by the Lord? She longed to share

her benefits with the whole world. Crickets chirped, an owl hooted; there were many night noises and the air was filled with fresh scents.

The ruins of the old monastery stood faintly silhouetted against a starry sky. As Thérèse Ursule gazed at them, they seemed to expand. The broken walls filled in, fruit trees grew against them; friendly sloping roofs provided shelter; chickens clucked, ducks quacked, turkeys strutted, pigeons fluttered round the chimneys; hoes clicked in the gardens, voices sang, praised God and laughed. And then the vision faded. But how lovely it had been! Thérèse Ursule clasped her hands in ecstasy. She forgot her hunger, she forgot her fatigue. It was as though she had touched the spring of life. The filth and tragedy of the prison which had seemed to cling about her now dropped away. In imagination she still smelled the peaches ripening in the sun, still heard the echo of the happy busy life. Oh, if those tumbling walls could be rebuilt! If that vision could materialize and be made a refuge for all the wanderers who passed, for all the poor who wished to exchange fresh air for foul air, for all the

outcasts of society. Oh, if only she had the means to do all this at her disposal! Suddenly a voice resounded in her ears. "To the faithful all things are possible."

Thérèse Ursule fell on her knees and thanked the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Holy Saviour and the Lord of Heaven for Their guidance. She knew that she had been shown her work in life; and to that work she dedicated her love, firm in her belief in its accomplishment. She remained in prayer and meditation all night long, surrounded by the ivy-covered, crumbling walls where birds nested and mice and rabbits hid and which, with God's help, she would transform into a sanctuary for all who knocked upon the door.

The next day the Abbé Brunoy came to see her with three newspaper photographers to take her picture. They were all full of the "psychic writing," as they called it. The newspaper men asked clever questions to satisfy themselves that Thérèse Ursule had never studied Arabic. The Abbé Brunoy replied to them impatiently. Of course, having a gipsy mother did not mean she had a knowledge of the Arabic language.

His old cheeks reddened in disgust at such absurdities. He showed the men Professor Desfestins' translation. They could see for themselves these were without doubt the specifications of the former monastery. They paced the walls and saw that the measurements coincided. Well, it was very strange and interesting.

Thérèse Ursule listened in silence. Her heart was filled with joy. This was another proof that the vision she had seen the night before was a Heavenly direction. What a relief to know that those mysterious marks were not an evidence of evil. She smiled as she recalled how long she had struggled against them. The men photographed the ruined chapel, exploded lights inside it, and photographed the paintings on the walls; photographed the Abbé Brunoy, photographed Thérèse Ursule beside her mother's grave, standing on the hillside, and cobbling shoes. They handed her a piece of chalk and asked her to kneel before the altar.

"We want to take a picture of you as you were when you did the writing."

But this last Thérèse Ursule refused to do and the Abbé Brunoy supported her refusal.

The few villagers who had not gone off to the fields to work watched the whole proceeding from the road. They did not approach nor speak and when one of the men called and asked them to pose in a picture too, they all moved off except old Poulbot. Their hearts were bitter against Thérèse Ursule. They had all lost dear ones in the fighting. Old Poulbot had no one to lose. Even if he had, he would not have missed a chance of being pictured in the papers. He beamed on his stick and grinned inanely.

"We'll call him the oldest inhabitant," said one of the men and gave him fifty centimes. Old Poulbot wished it was a franc. He could get a big glass of Mar du pays for a franc. The men made up this sum.

When they left they gave Thérèse Ursule five francs. Here was a nest egg for her mighty undertaking. Poulbot eyed the money enviously. Why should the strangers give her so much and him so little? It wasn't fair. He told them so as he walked with them down to their motor. Couldn't he tell them more about

Thérèse Ursule than that old Abbé? Why, he was just a newcomer. "Took Abbé Castel's place when he left to fight the English."

"The who?"

"The English."

The men all laughed. "That must have been some time ago."

"Ah, no! You know this war has not been going very long. Why, I remember wars that lasted much longer—when men were men and fought like tigers, I can tell you. That was before Massino was a boy. He was Thérèse Ursule's father. He murdered our good old priest. You know of that? No? Well, I can tell you many things. He was a magician—talked to the Devil every evening after dark. I saw them with these very eyes. Great black hairy creature with fiery breath and teeth long like a lion's fangs. She comes of a mysterious family, does Thérèse Ursule Corbeille. There's black blood there and black doings. Well, good day to you," and old Poulbot hobbled off.

He hoped the men would follow to hear more. They did. For two hours they sat before the café door drinking raspberry wine and

listening to gossip. And when they left their places were taken by the peasants. Poulbot had stories for them too. Of how Thérèse Ursule had hoodwinked the Abbé and the rich strangers as well.

"She says she wants to build a place to let in all the criminals of the world. Look out for her, I warn you. She'll have it full of escaping English in a jiffy."

"Germans you mean," a voice called from the listening group.

"Of course, I do, that's what I said, didn't I?" He glared around. No one answered. "Well, that's what she wants to do and asked those gentlemen to help her, if you please." He hiccoughed loudly. "But I cleared their minds a bit. They were grateful too. They said to me 'You've done a good work today, old man,' and one of the gentlemen handed me this money."

Old Poulbot staggered slightly and opened his palm. It was empty.

"Where's my money, who's got my cash?"

Chairs were overturned, everybody joined in the search. No money could be found.

Poulbot turned out his pockets and shook his trousers. Snuff and bits of dried tobacco fluttered to the ground. He shook a trembling fist. "Someone has robbed me of my hard-earned wages, but I'll get even, by God I will."

Returning to Nice, the newspaper men laughed and chatted of their day in Peille. How far away from life it seemed. It was just like the Middle Ages—Thérèse Ursule with her visions of God and Poulbot with his glimpses of the Devil. How credulous those mountain peasants were, ready to swallow any sort of story.

The motor entered Nice and drove along the sea-front. Lights gleamed from the great white hotels, palms nodded in the wind. Red Cross nurses, convalescent soldiers, refugees, foreigners, and people of every description filled the Promenade des Anglais. It was good to hear the latest war news, to eat a well-cooked dinner in a big, gay crowded room. Here everybody's mind was busy. Dressmakers, jewellers, hotel keepers. Ammunition had to be made, guns manufactured, business of all kinds pursued. These crowds could not be vege-

tables filled with visions. Here the great machine of civilisation had to be kept moving; a hand withdrawn was crushed beneath its wheels. Bands played gaily and the moon cast a path of spangles across the water.

In Peille the white rays fell on the sleeping village lighting up grey sombre houses. Houses that were old before the foundation stone of Nice was laid, houses that would be useful when every building now in Nice was gone, houses that had withstood the raids of the Saracens and of the Phœnicians, earthquakes, wars, and floods, now slept in the stillness of the mountains.

Thérèse Ursule's heart was happy. Bright visions filled her dreams. Everywhere she saw the hand of God. He had sent her the plans for restoring the monastery. He had sent her generous strangers who would write articles and interest everybody in the work. He would give her strength to carry out His undertaking. She only had to trust in Him. Life was easy.

XIII

A STEADY November rain hid the mountain tops and veiled the valleys. Muddy streams gushed down the paths. Water trickled from the roofs, ruffled birds sought shelter. Three days of continuous rain.

Thérèse Ursule sat alone and listened to the pattering. The village people could not forgive her for sheltering a German. Even Madame Tulec stayed away. Madeleine would not allow her to go near the chapel, give Thérèse Ursule work or help her in any way. "She sides with the people who killed Louis Sixte and all who are with her are against me." So Thérèse Ursule's days were lonely. The rain fell and fell and fell. An occasional clatter of sabots on cobbles proved human life was not extinct in Peille.

Such was the day when Lilly Field set out from Nice. She had seen Thérèse Ursule's photograph in a newspaper and recognised at once the face that had stood between her and

death. So she closed the door of that miserable room behind her and went in search of her deliverer. Madame Roselli thought she must have lost her mind, starting out in such a down-pour.

Lilly's legs were still weak, but she did not turn back. Her cheap high-heeled slippers were not made for muddy roads and mountain climbing, but they were all she had. After the first hour's walking she took them off and carried them beneath her arm. Mud oozed up between her toes, stones bruised her feet. She felt she had been walking for several years when at last she reached Peille. Water poured down the steep narrow streets, there was no sign of life in them.

Lilly sat on a stone step and put on her slippers. "Might as well look civilised," she murmured to herself. Through the door behind her she heard a soft stamping on straw and the bleating of a goat. The artificial roses on her hat dripped red streaks down her back. Suddenly she felt eyes staring at her. She looked up. A woman's head disappeared from a window above. She called several times before the

woman looked out again and grudgingly told her where Thérèse Ursule lived.

"This must be wrong—surely no one can live here." Lilly stood in the midst of the ruined monastery. Rain pattered on the ivy leaves, the long brown grass was beaten flat. The wind had scattered yellow gorse petals everywhere. They added to the sense of utter desolation. At intervals the tinkle of a bell came from high up the mountain side. What a fool she had been to wander all this way on such a wild goose chase.

Her thoughts were interrupted by a soft murmuring. She listened, then tiptoed towards the sound. Through an open doorway she saw a young girl kneeling. Her hands were clasped, her eyes shone like two lights from Heaven. Lilly would have known her by her voice alone. She stood waiting in her cheap finery, imitation pearls around her throat, imitation lace on her skirt, tawdry rings on her fingers. All the things she had taken such pride in now embarrassed her. Her hands trembled. She did not know whether she ought to bow her head.

So many years had passed since she had heard praying.

At last Thérèse Ursule looked up and smiled. Lilly stumbled forward. Her voice choked in her throat.

"I had to come and see you. Don't you recognise me?"

"Won't you sit down and rest?"

A tiny fire was burning in the ruined chapel. Lilly took off her thin slippers and laid their soles towards the heat. The wooden altar, the painted walls, the smoke, the rain beating on the grey stone roof, the wild loneliness outside made Lilly feel she was living in a dream. She found herself talking to this pale gentle girl in her cotton dress and bare feet as she had not talked to anyone before; telling her her life, her soiled life of work, envy, crime, passion, drugs and prison. She waited for reproofs but received none. The prison missionaries had always lectured her and threatened her with Hell. Thérèse Ursule took her hand and comforted her.

"There are so many paths to God and we all stumble along them. None of us know how

we should meet another's problems. We must help each other, not judge each other."

At sunset the rain stopped, the clouds parted and a brilliant rainbow spanned the sky. The wet world glittered as though strung with crystal. Lilly caught her breath in admiration.

"My, it's lovely! Reminds me of when I was a child. Of course, it wasn't so grand as this, but there was a clump of willows down by a stream below our house. They grew so thick you couldn't see the factory when you got among them. They were a great place for thinking—" she stopped self-consciously. Her old friends might have ridiculed such language but Thérèse Ursule did not seem to find it funny.

The bell for Vespers started ringing. Robins hopped daintily, looked for worms in the wet ground and called to each other in loud voices. The sky was very blue; the long rain was over. Lilly impulsively caught up Thérèse Ursule's hand and kissed it. "I feel so young and happy." She threw fresh wood on the fire and bustled about the evening meal. She wanted Thérèse Ursule's plans to become

her plans. She wanted to live here always. She examined the thick stone walls with interest. Her brother Alf had been a bricklayer. She wished she could have him come and help rebuild the monastery now. Thérèse Ursule showed her the money she was saving for her great purpose.

"Well, it won't go far with Union wages." Lilly shook her head.

"We must trust in God. If it is His wish we shall succeed. He always provides. The day He ceases to provide the things of this world He offers us a place in Heaven, and that, of course, is a great happiness and honour."

This was a new point of view towards starvation. Lilly listened spellbound. "She's a saint, a miracle, a messenger from Christ," she thought, and the bitterness of years left her heart. Her eyes which had been like old, old mirrors, became clear, and she sang as she worked.

XIV

CLEAR cold days followed the long rain. Gorse made golden patches against St. Pancrace's Cliff, autumn leaves fluttered high up in the air and brilliant berries hung in clusters on the briars and wild rose stalks. All the mountains to the north were white with snow. The peasants spent their days pruning olive trees, gathering faggots and preparing their distant fields for the winter.

Lilly Field remained in Peille. Her pale cheeks grew rosy, her arms grew strong, and each day her reverence for Thérèse Ursule increased. In prison she had been taught basket making. Now she showed Thérèse Ursule how it was done. Together they wove baskets from the wild vines that grew between the mountain rocks; flat shallow baskets for carrying fruit to market, deep baskets, sewing baskets, baskets of all shapes and sizes. They dyed them bright colours and sold them to a shop in Monte Carlo. Half of what the baskets fetched was put into

the box which held the building fund. It grew heavier and heavier. At the bottom of the box lay the directions for rebuilding, neatly folded. The Abbé Brunoy had copied the translation on fine white paper and given it to Thérèse Ursule to keep. His writing was delicate and slanting, and along the margins he had inserted prayers. Neither Lilly nor Thérèse Ursule could read such delicate writing, but often they looked at it in admiration.

Then, one day, the box and all its contents disappeared. Lilly was furious. Thérèse Ursule bowed her head in resignation. "It's our fault, Lilly. We were becoming too fond of it. The Blessed Virgin has taken it away. She saw the love of gold had begun to overpower us."

"There was no gold in it—only silver and copper—and we'd worked so hard to get it too."

As they were talking a great hullabaloo broke out down in the village. Old Poulbot stood in the Place Pommes Fleuries, a bottle in his hand. He sang and stamped his feet and called on all who passed to have a drink.

"I've found the cash the strangers gave me. The Lord is on my side at last."

Money jingled in his pockets. Children pulled his fluttering rags, squealing with delight. Some of the women shook their heads in disapproval. Dogs barked and labourers, returning from over the hills, stopped to see the fun and remained to drink. Their little donkeys stood huddled on one side, patiently peeping from beneath the great bundles of brush strapped to their sides.

Lilly Field had only to see this scene to know the meaning of it. Pushing her way to Poulbot, she grabbed him by the neck.

"You old thief!"

She shook him. A shower of coins fell on the ground. Everybody stood still before her anger. She cursed Poulbot, she abused the village.

"A set of swine, that's what you are. You call yourselves Christians, do you? A fat chance any one of you has got to enter Heaven. Up in those ruins a saint is living. And you'd let her starve and now you steal her savings to get drunk on. God damn you all!"

Foul words burst from her lips, terrible words, and tears streamed down her cheeks. The precious plans had been destroyed and nearly all the money spent. She beat the old man with her fists. The Abbé Brunoy stopped the fighting. He rebuked Lilly for her language and called the local gendarme to lock them both up in the village gaol. Then he went up to tell Thérèse Ursule all that had happened. The money was hers, so she would have to make the charge against Poulbot.

“And a good thing to have him out of the way for a while, my daughter. It’s high time that old reprobate was taught a lesson. As for the girl from Nice, tomorrow when they let her out I hope she’ll go back where she came from.”

Thérèse Ursule spent the night in thought and prayer. She was utterly distressed. She blamed herself. It was her fault. She had saved all that money—almost a hundred francs. A snare and temptation to all who saw it. Had not she and Lilly gloated over it each evening? Had not the jingling box filled her with false pride? Yes, she had done wrong. She had

lacked faith in Christ's directions. She had not waited for Him to tell her how to fulfill His purpose. When He wished those ruined walls rebuilt, He would show her the way Himself.

"O pure and holy Mother of Christ, help me now. O Lamb of God, have pity on me in my distress. My ambitions have caused this trouble. Punish me, I am the culprit."

And as she prayed sharp pains as from a hundred needles pierced her forehead. Warm beads of sweat trickled down her cheeks. She wiped them off with a bit of white cloth and went on praying. By the thin light of dawn the cloth showed red streaks and on Thérèse Ursule's brow were wounds as though a crown of thorns had been forced upon her head. But she had found peace.

Neither Lilly Fields nor old Poulbot slept that night. Lilly spent the hours weeping. She had disgraced her dear Thérèse Ursule Corbeille. Poulbot was frightened. As he grew more sober, pictures of prison for theft filled his mind and, worse still, the vengeance of the Church. The Abbé Brunoy had been

terrifying in his anger when he heard the money was gone and the plans destroyed. "It will take me days to copy them out again, and all because of you. Have you no respect even for the revelations of the blessed founder of this town? The Abbé Sextus should visit his wrath upon you. I hope he will."

The village court room was crowded. People packed against the walls. The air stank. Everyone condemned old Poulbot, though no one wished Thérèse Ursule to have a chance of showing the anger she must surely feel. She was a waif, the daughter of a murderer, a spy against the country, a traitress. They craned their necks when she came into the room beside the Abbé. She had bound her head in a white cloth to hide the wounds. "Trying to look like a nun, I suppose. Oh, she's a sly one!"

Lilly sat, her face buried in her hands. Old Poulbot shed maudlin tears and the wet ran down his chin.

The case was called. Thérèse Ursule stood up. At first no one believed their ears. "A man can receive nothing, except it be a gift from Heaven," they heard. "That money was

not a gift from God, therefore, it was not mine. . . . The Blessed Jesus did not condemn the world, so who am I to condemn this man?" and other noble sayings. As they listened to her many cried out in admiration. The Mayor rapped on his desk for order.

"Then, Mademoiselle, you make no charge?"

"I have no charge to make. [The money was his if he needed it."

The court was dismissed. A great hubbub followed. Poulbot, when at last he understood he was free, wept and cried out in relief.

"A saint!"

"She is indeed a holy person!"

And the Abbé Brunoy had to force the admiring crowd back, for they would have smothered the girl. Madame Tulec took her in her arms and Madeleine forgave her. All saw the wounds upon her forehead and the wounds in her hands and realised they had misjudged her. They followed her to the chapel on the hill and she talked to them.

During the confusion Lilly Field ran off and hid among the rocks, for she was ashamed.

She did not come out until dark. Then Thérèse Ursule comforted her. They prayed before the painting of the dear Virgin, and made a resolve to exchange their work for food, clothes and other necessities. Money was not for them. Never should they accept it again.

“We lacked faith in God. We must hope and pray, not try to hasten His designs. If He wishes to restore these walls through us, then He will do it, for the ways of the Lord are mysterious and His power beyond our understanding.”

And the darkness was filled with hundreds and hundreds of fireflies, though their time was long past, and the skies were ablaze with shooting stars. The people looked at all this in awe and thanked God for the wonder He had bestowed on Peille.

It was after this night that her great miracles of healing began, miracles for which Thérèse Ursule Corbeille became famous throughout Provence. Prophetic dreams like those of Anne Catherine Emmerich, the pious German nun, and other miracles besides, such as the saving of Pierre Maynard's child who was being

strangled to death by some unknown growth in his throat. The boy's face was black and his body rigid when his parents brought him to Thérèse Ursule. She called his name gently. He opened his eyes and, as they watched him, his cheeks resumed their natural colour and he spoke for the first time in seven days.

Also, there was the rescue of Joseph Crass-croute, the local carpenter. He was perched high up on a scaffolding mending the roof of the barber's shop when the boards gave way. The stones beneath him were sharp and pointed and as he fell he called on Thérèse Ursule to intercede with God to save him from death. "As I called a hand seemed to seize my hand and jerk me upright—and I came down gently on my feet instead of bursting my skull wide open." And he painted a picture of the accident and gave it to Thérèse Ursule to hang on her walls so that it should be a permanent witness of the danger from which her pure faith had rescued him.

There was the miracle of the cherries. A poor widow had three fine cherry trees. Every year she sold the fruit and made enough from

it to clothe and feed her children for many months. In the spring of 1918 there was a great frost and all the blooms were killed, so there was no fruit upon the trees in June. The widow heard of Thérèse Ursule and came to her for help. It was a three days' walk across the mountains. Thérèse Ursule saw her coming in a dream. She carried a child in her arms and a little girl of six trudged at her side. In the morning Thérèse Ursule told Lilly of the dream and they asked in the village for food to give to the woman. Then they went up the path beyond St. Bernard's chapel to meet her. At noon they saw her far off and the children were crying because they had had nothing to eat that day. When the woman saw Thérèse Ursule and the provisions she had brought her, she wept. They sat in the shade of an acacia tree and the children were fed and rested. Thérèse Ursule prayed with her and assured her she need not fear, for the gentle Virgin protects all mothers and would certainly relieve her distress now. A week after the woman had returned to her cottage the cherry trees burst into flower, although it was July; and they bore

fruit, more fruit than they had ever borne before; and the fruit fetched a high price because at that season there are no other cherries to be had. The widow wrote all this to Thérèse Ursule and sent her a basket of the fruit by a shepherd who wanted to see the saint who had worked this miracle. And all the people of Var du Fontenac where the widow lived, talked of the wonder.

There was the miracle of the mad bull that was being taken from Ste. Agnès to be sold in Menton. Two men with sharp goads walked beside him and a third man led him by a halter. As they passed through the main road of Peille the bull broke the rope and ran, with bloodshot eyes, bellowing through the village. The people locked themselves in their houses and tried to shoot the animal from the windows, but their bullets merely lashed him to greater fury. He leapt the wall to the ruined monastery where Thérèse Ursule and Lilly Field were seated, weaving baskets. Lilly screamed and ran into the chapel, but Thérèse Ursule was not frightened and sat still. The bull lowered his head and charged at her. The terrified people

covered their eyes in horror. When they looked up again the bull was feeding from Thérèse Ursule's hand. She led him gently back to his guardians who took him to Menton without further difficulty.

So Thérèse Ursule served God in the exercise of charity, meditation and penitence. She truly believed that life was not a long winter but a joyous summer. "If we plant seeds along our paths flowers will grow."

People came from miles around to see her and hear her talk. Many believed in her, others did not. For as travellers ask for sun and gardeners pray for rain, so everybody cannot be satisfied.

On every day of every year that passed, Thérèse Ursule waited for a sign from Heaven to show how her great purpose in life was to be accomplished. Not once did she doubt that in some way she would be the instrument by which the ancient foundation of the Abbé Sextus would once more provide a refuge for those who sought shelter.

"We must be more patient, Lilly. Never try to force the hand of God."

So they went about their usual work.

It was just before Easter in the year 1925 that she told Lilly Field the time was near. But the ways of the Lord are mysterious, and neither she nor Lilly Field could foresee the pattern of His design.

XV

THE Hôtel de Paris is the finest hotel in Monte Carlo. It faces an open square filled with flowers and beyond the square lies the Mediterranean Sea. Here people come from all over the world to be amused. There are gala dinners, operas, diamonds, beautiful furs, dancers from Russia, from Tunis, and from Paris. There are negro singers, golf, tennis, cocktails and champagne. But all these distractions are as nothing compared to the Casino. Only the croupiers speak above a whisper in the Casino and the rattle of the counters on the tables never ceases. Silent crowds watch silent crowds at play.

Jules Fosterman was a born gambler, but for three weeks luck had been against him. His wife was glad that in two days' time they would be leaving Monte Carlo. It was Easter and the smart season was at an end. She would be glad to return to New York where Jules could exercise his passion in the theatre. She

knew that he had cabled home for more money and she determined that that money should not be left in the Casino. There was a diamond necklace to be had for half its value. "We're selling it for a lady who lost rather heavily last week," the jeweller had said. And this unknown woman's loss was one of the threads upon which Thérèse Ursule's fortune hung.

It was Sunday morning. Mai Fosterman lay in bed and schemed. If Jules could be kept from the Casino that night, the necklace would be hers next morning. Easter bells rang out gaily. "Oh, you baby" was being hummed off key in the bathroom. Jules was shaving. Mai looked with unseeing eyes at the blue Mediterranean sparkling in the sun. She was accustomed to the best suites in the best hotels and her youth in her father's pawnshop was far behind her.

"What about a drive this afternoon, honey?"

"Sure, so long as we don't get back too late. I want to buck that Casino this evening."

Jules came into the room. His expression was genial, his features heavy, and he had a wall-eye. He lighted a cigar and sat beside

Mai on the bed. Long years of experience had taught her when to oppose him, so she said nothing now.

After lunch they drove up past Roquebrune and towards the Grande Corniche, a road built by Napoleon that skims along the topmost ridge of the Alpes Maritimes. On one side stretch endless chains of mountains, on the other the sea. It is a favourite drive.

In La Turbie the car had to stop. One of the tires was punctured by a nail. While the chauffeur changed the wheel Mai and Jules went into a café for a drink. Before the doorway a little girl of eight was seated on a stool crying. She was dressed in her best clothes and in her hand she held a paper bag and a bunch of flowers. She wept silently, as though her heart were breaking. Twice the woman who owned the café came out and tried to console her, but she would not be comforted. Even the franc Jules gave her did not stop her tears.

"Poor kid, I wonder what's the matter with her."

Mai knew a little French, so she tried to find out. Their chauffeur finally solved the mys-

tery. On Friday the child's puppy had got loose and strayed into the road; a cyclist had struck it; now it lay suffering in a box behind the bar.

"She was going to Peille to ask Thérèse Ursule to cure it. Some friends promised to take her, but they must have forgotten, for they left La Turbie long ago."

The paper sack contained peppermints which she had bought for Thérèse Ursule and she had picked the flowers for her too. Mai and Jules were touched by the story and Mai's agile mind also saw in it a possible means of keeping her husband away from the Casino. It was she who suggested that they take the little girl to Peille.

"We can leave her there with her friends to bring her home again."

Jules lighted a fresh cigar and gave one to the chauffeur to smoke later.

"Well, a saint is one of the few things still left for me to see, so I'd just as soon go there as anywhere else."

The child's name was Mireille. She sat up very straight as they drove along and clutched

her flowers and peppermints. On the floor at her feet the injured puppy lay in its box. At intervals they passed groups of country people, all going the same way. The road was narrow and dangerous, so Charles had to drive slowly. He told them about Thérèse Ursule. No, he had never seen her. The mountain people believed in her. That lame man they had just passed was probably going to her for help.

The country grew desolate and more desolate. Dust whirled out in a thick cloud behind them. Now and then the metallic whirr of a katydid came from the hot stones and parched plants. At last they came in sight of Peille. Charles stopped the car for them to see the view. Olive-planted terraces rose in tiers up towards the village which at this distance could scarcely be distinguished from the rocks around it. But there it lay, flattened against the mountain side as though thrown by some giant's hand from where their car now stood.

"Well, what do you know about that now?"

For a moment Mai forgot the diamond necklace and Jules forgot roulette and baccarat. Nature commands attention sometimes. Ten

minutes later they swept beneath St. Pancrace's Cliff, across the narrow bridge and down into the Place Pommes Fleuries. It was deserted, but they could hear men and women singing further up the mountain.

"I guess we have to walk to where the service is."

So Jules, Mai and little Mireille climbed the Rue du Feu. Charles came just behind them with the puppy.

"Isn't this cute?" . . . "I'll say it's quaint!" . . . "So unconventional!" . . . "Looks like the end of the world to me!" and many other ejaculations of wonder and surprise escaped them when they stopped for breath. Jules shook his head. One of his eyes looked towards the sky, the other at the old grey walls and deep-set doorways. A lamb began bleating just beside them.

"Why, Jules, I do believe they keep animals in the houses where they live!"

"Come away, honey. You can't tell what might be behind that door. No wonder these people believe anything. Why, if I stayed here long I'd go crazy myself."

A crowd of country people were gathered in an open space among the ruined walls. Some were seated on stones, others stood beneath gnarled olive trees. Many of the old people had taken off their dusty shoes because they had walked a long way and were tired. Blue gentians, wild snowdrops and other spring flowers bloomed all around. A strange fruit tree, a mass of white and pink blossoms, filled the air with perfume. Bees hummed in and out among its branches gathering honey.

A young woman stood against one of the walls on the upper side of the slope. She wore a cotton dress and a white cloth was bound round her head. Her voice was gentle. She talked with the people rather than preached to them. Often one of them would stop her to ask a question or to argue. Some children were chasing butterflies down in a distant corner of the ruins. Their clear young voices were not disturbing.

Mai and Jules stood a little aside from the crowd. He threw away his cigar and stamped on it. Later he noticed several of the men were smoking, so he took out another one and

he and Mai sat down on the grass. They could not understand what Thérèse Ursule was saying, but the scene was pleasant.

When Thérèse Ursule saw the strangers arrive she turned to Lilly and said, "That lady and gentleman have something important to say to me."

"Would you like me to go over and ask them?"

She shook her head. "No, they will speak when the Lord is ready."

Little Mireille found her friends. Her lips moved in inaudible thanks and she went off with her puppy, peppermints and wilting flowers to join them. The afternoon wore on. Jules took out his watch.

"Say, honey, it's getting on for six."

"Let's wait a minute in case she does some miracles. I want to see what happens to that little dog."

Jules lay back and looked at the great mountains through half-closed eyes. New York seemed a long way off. He wondered what the old man with the red ribbons on his hat would think of Broadway. Dusty, crowded electri-

cal Broadway. He hoped that Englishman's play he'd bought would make a pile of money. Perhaps he ought to send a telegram to London and try to get the English caste. Mai interrupted his reflections.

"Wake up, Jules! Look!"

A young man was being carried up to Thérèse Ursule. They saw her kneel beside him and pray, her hands held up in supplication.

"What do you suppose those red marks in her palms are?"

Jules shook his head. "They look like cuts."

They saw the young man walk without support back to his family. His mother wept on his shoulder. She had never thought he would walk again.

Thérèse Ursule healed two men and one young girl that Easter Sunday. First the cripple; then a man who had lost his eyesight in the war; and lastly a girl of sixteen whose arm was paralysed. Women held out babies for her to kiss. People prayed and sang and laughed and wept. Mai forgot her make-up. Black tears fell upon her fresh spring dress. Jules

kept murmuring under his breath "My God—my God—Christ, what do you think of that?"

They saw little Mireille give Thérèse Ursule her peppermints and flowers and Thérèse Ursule take her on her lap and talk to her.

At last the crowd began to leave. Many of them would have to walk all night to reach their homes. The sun had set. There was a great shaking of hands, tears, laughter and thanksgiving.

Jules and Mai come closer. When they reached Thérèse Ursule's side she looked up at them. Her eyes were like stars; she knew the time for which she had waited so long was now come. With Lilly as interpreter, Jules found himself saying, "Tell her she must come to America." He found himself making her an offer; a tour throughout the United States. Mai heard herself adding her persuasions to her husband's.

"Why, Mademoiselle, the people in our country would have to see what you did today to believe it."

"That is sad, Madame. We must believe in God's wonders to see them."

“Well, I expect there is something in what she says.”

While they were talking Mère Lupez hobbled up the path. She had never forgiven Thérèse Ursule and never spoke to her. Sometimes she came and stood on the other side of the wall to listen to the talk and singing. Now she peered up at Jules with old glazed eyes. She had heard the strangers were Americans. Perhaps they knew Emmanuel in New York? Jules gave her fifty francs and she hobbled off mumbling to herself, so old, so very old, and still waiting. No one paid attention to her any more. How could a man live in the same town as Emmanuel and never even see him? The fifty francs would keep her for six weeks. Well, that was something.

The Abbé Brunoy stood near by in his long black cassock. At first he could not believe his ears when he heard the strangers were asking Thérèse Ursule to go to America. The idea of such a thing! Who were these people? No one knew anything about them. What did they want her to do in that far-off land? Exhibit herself in a theatre? He almost fainted. No,

no, it was impossible. She was an innocent country girl, a holy character. They had seen her simplicity and power through God. He did not even wait for Thérèse Ursule to speak for herself. The idea of America thrilled Lilly Field, but she believed the Abbé Brunoy was right. In their excitement they both talked at once. Thérèse Ursule waited for them to finish. As soon as they were quiet she turned to Jules.

"Three days ago I knew that God would send me some sign. When you came here to-day I knew you had a message for me. I will do whatever you ask me. It is God's will."

The Abbé Brunoy begged her to wait, to consider a few days, even a few hours. For once Thérèse Ursule refused to follow his advice. She understood nothing. She did not know what was expected of her, but she was not frightened, for she believed the Blessed Virgin's hand was guiding her. "God has sent these people to me. I cannot hesitate."

Before Jules and Mai left Peille that night the whole affair was settled. Thérèse Ursule and Lilly would sail for New York the first

week in October. Jules would pay all their expenses. If her visit proved a success he would rebuild the monastery in accordance with the plans she had received from Heaven. She wanted nothing for herself. Jules looked at the plans incredulously. The Abbé Brunoy showed him the cuttings from the newspapers.

"All right. If she won't take a salary, I'll do what she asks. But only in proportion to her success. Tell her I can't promise to build a whole monastery unless she makes the money."

"I leave all that to him. The gentleman must act according to his conscience. I do not wish to bind him in any way."

Mai kissed Thérèse Ursule good-bye. "It's been a great experience, Mademoiselle. I hope you'll have a big success." She got into the car. "Then I'll see you in New York."

They drove off along the shelf-like road back to La Turbie. Jules smoked many cigars. The stars were very bright; mysterious shadows lay across the mountain sides and the valleys were dark. But Mai and Jules were too full of all

they had seen and all they planned to notice stars and shadows.

"I'll invite the leading New York doctors to go on the stage with her and ask each one to write an opinion about those wounds in her hands and round her head."

"That English girl looks a funny customer. You ought to get her story too."

"Oh, there's all sorts of publicity. I've just got to organise it. What do you think of Sam Silvey for the job? He's in Paris now, you know."

"Jules, d'you think she really knew we were coming?"

They talked until after daybreak. Jules did not visit the Casino—so Mai accomplished her purpose, though she had forgotten all about it.

The telephone reminded her next morning. The jeweller said she had promised to come in before ten o'clock.

"Oh, yes. That's true. I did say I'd come in. . . . No, don't sell the necklace to anybody else. I'll take it."

In two days the news of Thérèse Ursule's departure was known throughout the country-

side. Greater crowds than ever flocked to see her, prayed for her safe passage, and begged her not to stay away too long. Only she herself remained calm and often in the cool evenings strolled with Lilly among the ruined walls, planning how they should be rebuilt and thanking God for choosing her for this great work.

XVI

THE day for Thérèse Ursule and Lilly to leave arrived at last. They were to drive from Peille to Villefranche where the great steamships call on their way between Genoa and New York.

Long before dawn dark forms could be seen moving along the mountain paths. They were going to the ruined chapel to wish Thérèse Ursule Godspeed. To these simple peasants a journey to America was like a journey to Mars. The majority of them did not even know where America was. One old man was sure it must be near Lyon and nearly came to blows with a neighbour who declared America was in Brittany. He had a book called "Useful Information" which told him so. There it was—"Amorique," the ancient name for Brittany, meaning "wooded country." He pointed out this definite proof with a trembling horny finger. Whether it was near Lyon or in Brittany, they knew their dear Thérèse Ursule was

going far away and they were sad. They crowded up among the ruins for one last word from her. What would the sick, the troubled, the poor and the lonely do without her?

"Ah, she'll be missed, the dear sweet thing, she'll be wanted here every minute of the time she's gone."

"But it's glory or some great honour she's going to have out there. You can't grudge her that, may Jesus bless her."

Old Poulbot hobbled about with a heavy stick. He had put on a captured German helmet in honour of the day. Three times he took Lilly Field aside to whisper that he had kept his promise; not a drop of spirits had passed his lips for two whole months. "And not a drop shall pass them until Thérèse Ursule returns to Peille again." He beat his stick upon the ground to prove his determination.

"Well, you'd better not let her know that you intend to drink as soon as she gets back, or she'll stay away for ever."

The sun rose on a brilliant autumn morning. From a distance the old tiled village roofs looked like a bed of flowers, faded orange, blue,

red and rose. Swallows skimmed to and fro, black darts against a clear blue sky; and St. Pancrace's Cliff rose gauntly on one side.

Thérèse Ursule and all those who had come to say good-bye knelt in the open space before the chapel door. The Abbé Brunoy repeated the prayers for those who travel by sea and land. His voice trembled with emotion. He loved Thérèse Ursule and now she was going far away without even the protection of the Holy Roman Church. Lilly Field was a good girl too—he knew that now—but she was a Protestant. It made him very sad. There they knelt at his feet like two stray lambs. A sharp morning breeze blew his rusty cassock about his old legs and ruffled his thin grey hair. Behind him the Virgin Mary held her blue scarf over the bleeding form of Christ Our Lord. Before him black-clad men, women and children bowed reverently. Purple and white daisies dotted the ground and clumps of gorse gleamed yellow against the ruined monastery walls. They would soon be gone too, new buildings built and neat gardens laid out where all these wild flowers now grew; thus the past

would be restored. The Abbé Brunoy never doubted Thérèse Ursule's success. He held up a silver cross and prayed with his whole soul.

“‘And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways.’”

At eight o'clock all the bells of Peille began to ring. The wagon which was to take Thérèse Ursule and Lilly stood in the road below the ruins. Olive branches, sprays of bracken, wild thyme and many flowers were twined through the wheels and fastened to the sides. Red autumn leaves decorated the harness and reins. Two white donkeys drew it. Monsieur Suluson had arranged it all. Old Poulbot sat on the driver's seat beside him. Many people followed them along the road, singing hymns, carrying flowers and branches of bright berries. So Thérèse Ursule and Lilly started on their journey. Lilly clasped her hands and tried to quiet the excited beating of her heart.

When they reached the turning after which Peille can be seen no more, they stopped for one last look. The bells could still be heard;

the cracked bell of St. Sébastien's, the treble bell of St. Roche's chapel, the deep boom of the parish Church, the bell of St. Joseph's, and the sweet-toned bell from Nôtre Dame de la Collette's roof. Each held a memory for Thérèse Ursule Corbeille. They had given her music during her lame childhood. They had encouraged her when she was hungry and cold. Now they were giving her a final message of faith, hope and love.

In La Turbie crowds were waiting to see them pass. Shopkeepers ran into the road, babies were held up, women pressed close to the wagon. Thérèse Ursule felt as though her heart would burst with gratitude. They filled her lap with flowers, red apples, beads. Even a loaf of bread was thrust into her hands. From here she saw the sea for the first time in her life.

"It's as though the dear Virgin had spread her blue scarf across the world to give us pleasure."

They drove on, along the Grande Corniche and down to Eze. In Eze a table was set for them. It was eleven o'clock already. School

children sang and scattered rose leaves. Tourists looked on in amazement. The sun blazed down on the palm trees. As they were eating, a large motor car drove up. The occupant jumped out. Thérèse Ursule was so surrounded that he had to shout many times before he could reach her side. It was Sam Silvey. Thérèse Ursule and Lilly knew him well by now. He had taken photographs of them, of Peille, of the chapel walls and the ruined monastery. He had asked them many questions and written down the replies.

“Well, I was just on my way to get you and Mademoiselle.” He and Lilly talked. “What did you think was going to happen? Did she expect to get on the boat without any tickets or money or anything? I’ve brought a cameraman along, but if I’d known about all this I’d have had him on the job the whole time. Why, this scene’s wonderful!”

He asked about their luggage and could not believe his eyes when he saw the one small fibre suitcase. “Is that all?”

It was. A change of linen, scarfs for

Thérèse Ursule's head and a few other simple necessities were all they had.

Villefranche lies below the main coast road. It nestles like an old clouded stone, forgotten in that blazing string of jewels—Cannes, Nice, Beaulieu, Cap d'Ail and Monte Carlo—which stretches along the Mediterranean coast. Travellers who sail or disembark there never see it. The sagging plaster houses come down to the water's edge. They are painted many colours. Fishermen live in them; thick-chested brown men who spend their days in arguments and their nights out on the black waters of the bay. Women sit on low chairs mending the long russet nets laid out to dry. Mongrel dogs and fierce cats carry on a constant warfare. Little black-eyed children play, scream, and beg pennies from all strangers.

When Thérèse Ursule arrived the men stopped arguing, the women laid aside their mending, the children left their games. They joined the crowd already with her. Everybody waited beneath the trees that shade the open square beside the little custom house. Motors heaped with luggage filled the air with dust.

Fishing boats bobbed on the water, pigeons fluttered. A smart white yacht stood ready to transport the passengers to the giant steamer. Orders were shouted.

At three o'clock the boat steamed up the bay like some proud swan, disdainful of the petty tumult on the shore. Madame Tulec clasped Thérèse Ursule to her bosom.

"God bless you, darling. You're like my own sweet daughter. Today I seem to see you as you used to be, a poor crippled child lying on that heap of leather in my workshop."

The two women clung together, then Thérèse Ursule and Lilly stepped on the sparkling yacht. Their friends lined the grey seawall waving handkerchiefs, calling to them and singing. They stayed there until the great ship sailed off round the cape. Already Thérèse Ursule seemed far away.

The Abbé Brunoy's heart was heavy. "Poor innocent, may God have mercy on her and her companion. May He protect them amidst all the varieties of their journey and bring them safely home to us again." He sighed and wiped his glasses. The motors were gone now.

The flowers and leaves that decked the cart were faded. He was very tired. It had been a long day.

A weary crowd trudged up the mountain road while far off on the water Thérèse Ursule watched the spray glitter in the setting sun. Bells rang, chains rattled, black smoke streamed across the sky and always the engine throbbed. Tubs of pink hydrangeas and green palms, luxurious chairs and rich people surrounded her. She closed her eyes and prayed for a calm spirit amid all this strangeness.

XVII

THÉRÈSE URSULE was not a good passenger. Jules Fosterman had cabled the Purser special instructions to look after her comfort. He did not wish her to lack anything. She and Lilly were given the best cabin on the ship.

On the first morning of the voyage Thérèse Ursule asked to be transferred. Surrounded by palms and flowers, protected by glass screens, she had seen a pale young man trying to find some shelter and comfort on the steerage deck. He was very weak and coughed incessantly. A young woman was with him. She was his wife. Her name was Amy. She told Thérèse Ursule that her husband was a sculptor. They were Americans.

"We've been living in Rome and the studios are apt to be damp there. My husband caught cold last winter and somehow he never was able to get rid of it, and the doctor says I must get him home quick or it may be too late." Her eyes were grey and full of love. "I have an

uncle in Arizona. It's very dry there. Joe really ought to be in bed now, but there is so little air in our room."

"Don't you worry, honey, this is fine. I feel like a different person already."

Children tumbled around them; peasant women, their heads bound up in woollen scarfs, gossiped; men wrestled, played games and smoked. A few young couples danced to a tinny gramophone. On the promenade deck a band was playing. Now and then its music could be faintly heard above the throbbing engines and rushing water. Joe began coughing again. Thérèse Ursule helped Amy take him to their cabin. It was small and dark and hot from the ship's engines. As soon as Joe was on his bed Thérèse Ursule returned to Lilly. Together they went in search of Sam Silvey. He was writing letters in the smoking room.

It was cool and quiet in there. Three women and a man were drinking cocktails in one corner. Their bright clothes made a gay spot of colour against the dark panelled walls. The hum of the engines could scarcely be heard and through the open windows the sea looked blue

and calm. Sam jumped to his feet. He did not know whether he should offer Thérèse Ursule and Lilly a drink or not. French people seemed to think nothing of a glass of wine. These thoughts were lost in the amazement caused by Thérèse Ursule's request.

"You mean you want to give up that beautiful stateroom and go into the steerage? You want to give it to some people you don't even know?"

His face grew quite red. Here was a difficulty he had not expected. What would Jules Fosterman say? What would the papers say if they found out? He tried to explain to her. Didn't she know all the passengers on the boat were interested in her and watching her every movement? Didn't she know nobody in America would understand her travelling steerage? Didn't she know Mr. Fosterman had a lot of money at stake? He had hired a theatre, he had spent thousands of dollars on publicity. Didn't she feel she owed something to him? To the man who was going to make her famous, had already made her famous?

"Tell him, Lilly, that I know nothing about

the things he is saying. Surely the size of the room I travel in cannot affect the work I have to do in his country."

Sam Silvey mopped his brow. He had not expected such an iron will from so mild a character. That day Thérèse Ursule and Lilly moved down to the steerage. Sam cabled to Jules in desperation. He did not want to be responsible. "FINE—FIRST CLASS PUBLICITY KEEP IT UP" was Jules' reply.

It took great persuasion to make Joe and Amy exchange their room.

"You've saved Joe's life," Amy kept repeating. "He would have died in that hole."

Thérèse Ursule stopped her. "The Lord gave me that room so that your husband might be comfortable. Don't thank me. I've always lived among the humble. I feel much more at home down here than up there with luxuries that embarrass me. My dear Lilly too agrees with me, don't you Lilly?"

On moonlight nights they sat and talked. Amy told Thérèse Ursule about their life in Rome, their struggles, Joe's great ambitions.

They were like two sparrows battered by the wind.

Every day Sam Silvey came down to see if Thérèse Ursule required him for anything. He stepped daintily and tried to look at ease. It annoyed him to see dirty children eating the fruit he had sent down from the first-class dining-room.

"Well, she certainly is a saint. I feel reformed every time I talk to her," he confided to a travelling rubber king.

Past the Rock of Gibraltar, the Azores; across the vast wastes of the Atlantic Ocean where by night phosphorus gilds the waves and by day spray lines them with a crystal fringe. Once more seagulls appeared above the masts shrieking and diving in the wake of the ship. Two days later New York rose out of the mists; roofs above roofs as though elbowing each other in a desperate effort to touch the sky. The sun was setting. A great liner glided out to sea; tugs hooted, ferries carried trains across the water, swift motor boats skimmed round them in mad circles, flags fluttered. Land again. How green the grass looked. Passen-

gers pressed against the deck rails, some going home, some merely travelling, many come to build a golden future. The band played. Hats were straightened, addresses exchanged, handkerchiefs waved. The boat bumped against the dock. The mystic blue days were over.

Thérèse Ursule left her friends in the steerage. They looked after her with loving eyes as she and Lilly followed Sam Silvey up to the first class deck. Her presence had given them confidence amidst all this hubbub. Women returned to their strange luggage—tin trunks, mildewed leather cases, bulky parcels wrapped in shawls and unbleached sheets. Brown-skinned men joked with each other, smoked, gazed at the crowded landing stage, watching the rich stream down the gangway. They did not know what they had to do nor where they had to go. Shy, alert, ready to strike, ready to laugh, they waited for the future to direct them.

Lilly's eyes danced. She laughed about nothing at all. The iron roar of New York thrilled her. Thérèse Ursule sat and waited for their turn to disembark. She clasped her

hands to stop their trembling and tried to calm her heart by thinking of Peille—the quiet hills, the great rocks, silver-leafed olive trees, the little rabbits that creep out at sunset, familiar faces and familiar voices. What could she do in all this bedlam? Then she felt ashamed. She could do nothing, but the Blessed Saviour could do everything.

Jules and Mai were waiting on the dock. They had brought a giant bunch of lilies. Thérèse Ursule was told to carry them as she landed. Photographs were taken for the daily papers, a cinema film was made for the weekly news reel.

“Well, if that’s all your baggage we can get through in no time.” Jules tipped a porter to carry the tiny suitcase. The customs’ officer was very polite.

They entered a great automobile. Mai turned to Lilly. “Tell Mademoiselle that we’ve got her a suite in a little quiet hotel, but if she doesn’t like it we can find her something else.”

Motors crowded around them, sirens blew, people filled the pavements, shop windows glit-

tered, steel hammers whirred like giant katydids, lights flashed in the sky. They passed a hoarding.

“See that?”

Special engagement beginning Monday, October
nineteenth—

Thérèse Ursule

The World's Wonder Worker

was written in great red letters across a white background. Beneath, in smaller letters, Lilly read, “You must see her to believe her.”

XVIII

CHÉRÈSE URSULE and Lilly were lodged on the tenth floor of the little quiet hotel. From their sitting room window they had a fine view across the East River. It was as though they floated in space, too high up for the noise of New York to penetrate, too high up for the sparrows to flutter on their window sills.

This Saturday morning bright October sun danced on the walls and on the roses, Michaelmas daisies and chrysanthemums with which Mai had filled the room. The air was clear and bracing, full of the sea. Jules sat in an armchair surrounded by newspapers and cigar ashes.

"I thought it over a lot and it seemed to me a mistake to take a hall or a theatre—to start with any way. You see it isn't like she could speak English. No, it isn't like that at all because then she could preach a sermon and give a full evening's entertainment. Now what I've arranged is much better and it won't take more

than twenty minutes of her time in the afternoon and another twenty minutes at night."

He paused. Thérèse Ursule's face was calm. He had dreaded this interview.

"I want everything to be dignified, solemn, something that will impress the public. You've seen how I'm using Church lettering on all the posters? I've got the best artist in New York to make me a set—an exact copy of those old ruins I saw her working in up in the mountains. When it's lighted I swear you'll think you're back home again. Why, that fellow has even made a grass mat with wild flowers blooming in it, the best wild flowers to be had in New York. I've got a hidden chorus of eight voices, four men and four women. They'll sing just before the curtain goes up. That'll put the audience in the right atmosphere.

"Then I've engaged an old English actor to introduce her. He's got a wonderful speaking voice. It'll thrill her even if she don't know what he's saying. After he's introduced her, he's going to invite some of the leading New York doctors up on the stage so they can examine those red marks on her hands and fore-

head and see they aren't fakes. Then I thought, Miss Field, you might just tell about your life in a few words. There's a young fellow I told to come here this afternoon who's got a lot of talent as a writer, only he hasn't quite found himself yet. Well, I want him to write up your story in a few lines so as you can learn it by Monday. Well, after that, that old actor—he's a well-known artist—is going to invite anybody who's lame or sick to come up on the stage and Mademoiselle will try to help them. He's going to say like she does that it's God working and sometimes nothing happens. Only if she can do a miracle her fortune's made—I mean that monastery is as good as built. Now, I've got all this arranged for a week at one of the world's finest theatres, the Palace Theatre. If she can get over, there, she can get over anywhere and I'll take a hall or a theatre for her and make her the biggest thing that ever came to this town. Well, what does she think about things? Is she happy? It's all right?"

"Tell him that God directed him to Peille,

that God told me to come here. I will do all that He tells me."

Jules was relieved when this reply was translated to him. He called them "Kid," "Honey," and "Sweetheart" and showed them all the photographs of their arrival in the morning papers.

Interviewers came and pelted Thérèse Ursule with questions. What did she think of the Pope? Of Aimée Semple Macpherson, Billy Sunday, of Christian Science?

"Many of those names I never heard of. I only know that all those who work in Christ's name are blessed."

"Doesn't know leading American Evangelists' names but thinks they are blessed" was scribbled in many notebooks.

They asked her what she thought of New York, of the modern generation, of women's dress today; what Church she attended. If she didn't go to any Church, then was she trying to found a new religion? When did she first feel the stigmata? What was her first miracle? How many people had she converted? What did she think about war?

Thérèse Ursule closed her eyes and prayed God. If these people would use as much energy in rooting out evils and planting virtues, there would be fewer sad, poor faces and rich, tired, disillusioned eyes around them. Years ago, before the war, the Abbé Castel used to sit and read to her. In her mind's eye now she could see his black-clad figure and twinkling eyes. She could hear his deep voice: "If I should know all the things in the world and should not be in Charity, what help would it be to me in God, Who will judge me by my deeds.' "

And the pencils of the cheaper papers scribbled, "Doesn't think college education necessary, believes in action, not words."

"And now tell us what you think of God. Do you believe in an old-fashioned God on a cloud or do you believe in Him as a great influence for Good?"

"I believe God is to each of us according to his love of God and his desire for God. Believe in Him and you will see. His mysteries are beyond human comprehension."

Mai came to take Thérèse Ursule to lunch.

She must be seen. They went to the Ritz. Eyes stared, dishes clattered, the band played; it was very hot. Thérèse Ursule sat, pale and silent. How long would this torture last? They drove through crowded streets, along a beautiful river, past monumental buildings. Jules said that he had arranged for her to go on Sunday evening to one of the great New York temples. She need only show herself beside the preacher. He wanted to meet her.

“Is that a Church?”

“One of the biggest in the world.”

“Then I am sorry I cannot go. I cannot enter any Church.”

No persuasion could alter her decision. Jules said it was a pity. Five thousand people prayed there every Sunday. He finally gave up. Lilly was with the author, writing up her story. The interpreter Mai had engaged was interested in Thérèse Ursule's refusal. Why could she never go into a Church? Why had her father sent such a last message? Later he repeated the conversation to a friend who told others. A reporter heard the story. His paper decided to investigate the matter.

Mai told Thérèse Ursule of all the great charities in New York. She took her to several of the leading settlements. White-capped nurses and noble-faced men and women received them. They explained their great work. She wept at the distress surrounding her. She thought of the poor peasants in Peille. Many had less money, but not one was as poor as these people. In Peille they had to trudge for miles along steep paths to reach their fields and miles back home at night. Yet they sang as they walked. Around them was beauty; here there were only ashes.

“If people would only live according to the teachings of our dear Lord, Jesus Christ, none of this could be.”

“Ah, Mademoiselle, in a complicated civilisation such as exists today it can’t be avoided,” a millionaire philanthropist explained. He was a kind, good man. “You have only to read political economy to understand that.”

“I don’t know what political economy is, but I believe if we followed the Bible we would not have to study political economy. I do not

know of any difficulty in life that man has not created for himself."

"You forget illness, don't you, Mademoiselle?"

"No. If we lived like the disciples, there would be little illness. The Bible gives us the best rules for health and, should they fail, Christ tells us to have faith in Him. If He wants us on earth He cures us; if not, He takes us home to Him."

Mai smiled proudly when the conversation was translated to her. She had thought she would be bored by this afternoon's excursion. To her surprise the time had flown by. Merely being beside Thérèse Ursule seemed to make her calmer. She spoke more softly and forgot to retouch her lips from time to time as usual.

"She is certainly the goods, Jules. I wish you could have come with us to that East-side settlement. Winthrop Todd was impressed, I tell you, and he's one of the richest men in New York."

"That's fine, honey. Still there's no telling how this hard-shelled New York crowd will act. She's going to open Monday night instead

of at the matinée performance. I got the management to agree this afternoon. I can get a lot of friends in the house for the evening performance."

All day Jules had been worried. "If she can just do one miracle, it'll be smooth sailing." That was the problem. Also, suppose nobody took her seriously? Suppose nobody went up on the stage to be cured? This disaster must be guarded against at all costs. On his way home he called upon a man whom he thought would make a good patient.

"I want you to sit at the back of the house, see? And when they invite people on the stage to be treated, you go, see? It only takes one person to break the ice, so when they see you going up, others will be sure to follow."

The man agreed. All day long he sold newspapers in the street. Hobbling about on his crutches, he was a well-known figure.

Thérèse Ursule and Lilly spent the evening in Central Park. They found a secluded bench. The noise of the distant traffic was like the mistral blowing through the mountains above Peille. This was the first time they had

sat in solitude beneath the stars since they had left home. Through the bare branches of the trees lighted windows rose, tier upon tier. They were like golden nets protecting the open stretches, the hills and streams from man's destruction. As all great cities are similar, so New York is like Paris and London. It frightened Lilly. It brought back all the sordid horror of her youth. Thérèse Ursule comforted her. Did not the Devil take Christ upon a mountain top and tempt Him? Had not all the great Saints and Martyrs throughout history been tried? Had they not suffered?

"That's true, Thérèse. I know all that is true, only I've had so much more experience than you, and this theatre is just a music hall. You've got no business there, believe me ——"

"Have you had greater experience than the Holy Virgin, than our dear Jesus, than God Himself? I am listening to Their voices. They have sent us here. Do not be frightened. Last night I saw again the fruit-laden walls, the lovely gardens, the sloping roofs, all my vision of the great monastery rebuilt. A place

of peace. Trust in God. We are His instruments. He is guiding us."

The hours passed. Now and then dark furtive forms crept by. Thérèse Ursule and Lilly slept there in the open. At dawn their long brown capes sparkled with dew. Sparrows twittered, robins pecked at the burnt grass. Only country noises filled the air. The sky was very blue and filled with rosy tumbled clouds. Little furry water animals plunged into a round pool. Ducks quacked contentedly. The great city was silent. In another hour these sweet sounds might be drowned in the tumult of civilisation. But they were always there.

Thérèse Ursule and Lilly washed their hands in a clear splashing waterfall and returned to their hotel refreshed. A sleepy-eyed porter looked at them in surprise. A bedraggled woman was on her knees mopping up the floor. She did not even look up when they came in. It was Sunday morning.

XIX

Thérèse Ursule

The World's Wonder Worker

blazed in lights above the entrance to the Palace Theatre. Jules Fosterman, a cigar between his teeth, greeted his friends among the crowd pouring into the marble lobby.

"Good luck, Jules!" . . . "Well, you going to show us something tonight, eh kid?" . . . "I meant to bring my Bible along, but I couldn't find it." . . . "Say, Jules, you don't expect this gang to pray, do you?" . . . "Well, how's the Bishop?"

The Maxes and Eds and Jakes and Sams and Georges, they were all there. They slapped Jules on the back, indulged in quick whispered business conversations, smoked cigars, spat, decided the theatre business was dead, and spoke in envious awe of the plays that were turning away people. And always New York poured

past them; young faces, old faces, painted faces, tired faces, kind faces, hard faces—all seeking distraction. Many were wearing silks and furs though they lived in close dark rooms, too like prison cells to spend an evening in.

Outside, Broadway flaunted electric invitations to smoke Coronas, buy silk stockings, eat brown bread, and ride on balloon tires for comfort. Crowds overflowed from the pavements into the jammed roadway, police whistles blew, taxis honked. It was as though some great human dam had burst and now swept relentlessly down the wide canyon of a street. This was the tide Thérèse Ursule must stop.

Mai, wrapped in ermine, sat in a stage box. Around her throat glittered the diamond necklace she had bought in Monte Carlo. Well, no matter if Thérèse Ursule succeeded or not, she really owed that necklace to her. The visit to Peille and nothing else would have kept Jules from the Casino that night last April.

Ushers in spick uniforms hurried up and down the aisles. The band played, chocolates were bought. Jaws worked, mechanically

chewing gum. Loving hands sought each other in the dark.

Thérèse Ursule was to come on after the interval. She and Miss Lulu Honey's Diving Belles were the principal attractions. Comedians produced gusts of laughter from the pale sea of faces. Dancers danced for them, singers sang and acrobats defied death to entertain them. The Palace Theatre prides itself on having the best vaudeville programme in the whole world.

"She's all right, is she, Miss Field? You've got everything you want?"

Sam Silvey stood in the passage before the dressing room. On the door a large star was painted.

"Mr. and Mrs. Fosterman are coming back to speak to you during the intermission just before you go on. I'll be here to take you down to the stage, so you needn't worry about anything."

He closed the door.

Thérèse Ursule and Lilly waited. Bright chintzes covered the furniture. There was an enormous mirror with lights all round it. A

bunch of white roses from Winthrop Todd was stuck into a green jug. The room smelled of disinfectant and stale scent. Lilly was very pale. She kept studying her life's history—two white typewritten sheets of it to be remembered. Now and then hurried footsteps were heard; a sudden burst of laughter in the passage; a few quick notes on a saxophone; the shrill voice of the call boy; someone hammering nails; and the swish of heavy curtains descending. Thérèse Ursule took Lilly's hand to calm her, spoke to her gently, reminded her of the pure faith of Ste. Agnès, of St. Gaétan of Thienne, of the Seven Brothers, of St. Zénon and St. François Caracciolo. Lilly's hands had ceased trembling when Mai and Jules arrived.

"Good luck!" Mai kissed them both. "I suppose you don't like to use any make-up, but the light down there will make you look awful."

She took an eyebrow pencil and a lipstick from her bag. "Just this little bit won't hurt."

Thérèse Ursule meekly submitted to the process.

The eight hidden singers had begun their

chorus when they reached the stage. A white light burned on the scene from Peille. Men hurried to and fro in feverish haste laying the grass mat. One held a stuffed rabbit which he placed behind a stone. Thérèse Ursule, Lilly, Jules and Mai took refuge in a corner. Wherever they stood they seemed to be in the stage hands' way.

The singing stopped, a noise like rain on a tin roof followed. It was applause. They sang again. Their voices were good. The scene was ready now. There it stood—even a flowering tree like the tree Massino planted on "Tu's" grave. Nothing could have been more exact, yet it bore no resemblance to the lovely spot it was meant to reproduce. Imitation, all imitation. The voice of the old English actor began. Thérèse Ursule was told to seat herself on an artificial rock. Mai draped her skirts—"just to make a picture."

"Clear!" a peremptory voice called.

Jules patted her on the shoulder. "Go to it, sweetheart, I'm depending on you." He and Mai took refuge in the wings. Lilly had been

posed just below Thérèse Ursule. The lights were adjusted.

“Thérèse, my teeth will chatter.”

Thérèse Ursule smiled. “No one can hurt you, my poor Lilly.”

They waited in silence. Not far off, in the sheltered nooks of the park, birds rustled sleepily, a breeze stirred the grass, a frog plumped into still water. Little, lost noises.

Mai suddenly put her hand on Jules’ shoulder. “Honey, look at her, look at her, what have we done?” Jules patted her arm.

“Sssh!” a fierce voice whispered.

“—and so, ladies and gentlemen, we are indebted to Mr. Jules Fosterman, whose name needs no introduction to you, for the privilege of seeing this little lady. People may say the age of miracles is past, but Mademoiselle Thérèse Ursule can prove they are mistaken. She has come here as an act of love and charity, without payment, without even a contract—I hope no one will repeat this to Actor’s Equity”—a gentle ripple of laughter—“and I am proud to have been selected to introduce this marvellous, this mystic character to the most

generous public to merit and the most sensitive to fraud, the greatest public in the world, my friends, the public of New York."

The curtains swung back.

The old actor held out his right hand to Thérèse Ursule and his left hand to Lilly Field. He led them to the footlights. Doctors came upon the stage, black-clad men, awkward in these strange surroundings. They examined the wounds on Thérèse Ursule's brow and in her hands. They discussed them in low rumbling voices, asked her how they came. The old actor knew French. He informed the public in a rich baritone of all Thérèse Ursule replied. The audience was quiet and expectant. If anyone ridiculed the statement that the wounds in her palms were given her by Jesus Christ during the course of a Heavenly vision, there was no evidence of it.

Then Lilly Field told of her conversion. Her body was wet with sweat. Her voice was high and trembling. She heard it as though someone else were speaking. Polite, if not enthusiastic applause rewarded her.

Jules watched from the wings, chewing the

end of an unlighted cigar. This part of the act was bound to be slow. He depended on the healing to bring success.

Thérèse Ursule spoke and moved as though she were in a dream. Invalids were invited on the stage. There was a short pause. Heads craned right and left to see if there was any response. Two men in uniform stood at the foot of a short flight of steps leading to the stage. They helped the newsdealer hobble up them. The old actor held out his hand in greeting.

“We hope you’ll be able to walk down again without assistance.” He smiled benignly, then looked around for other patients.

There was a good deal of shuffling. A girl came up on the stage. She was followed by a lanky man with a harelip. There was a general titter when he refused assistance up the steps. The hidden chorus sang softly. Thérèse Ursule stood with bowed head. She was probably the only person who had ever stood on that stage who had never suffered from poverty nor desired riches.

The old actor introduced the newsdealer to

the audience. His name was Bob Hardy. He used to be an actor. He was injured in a train wreck near Milwaukee. For six years he had sold papers on the corner of 42nd Street and Seventh Avenue.

Bob was examined by two of the doctors on the stage. They said he had all the symptoms of paralysis. He was led to where Thérèse Ursule waited.

She took his hand and looked into his face. The tense silence was broken by a short hysterical giggle. Then silence again. Thérèse Ursule's eyes burned through her mask of paint and powder.

"She's got 'em now," Jules whispered to his wife.

Without warning Thérèse Ursule seized Bob's crutch and broke it across her knee. She hurled the ends across the stage. A stream of words poured from her lips. The people leaned forward in their seats, spellbound.

"By God, she's cured him!"

What were these passionate words? Bob's arm was flung up as though to protect his face.

"Would you insult the Holy God? Would

you ridicule Christ our Lord in Heaven? Would you beg this mercy with lying lips? Go! Go! Hide yourself!"

She turned to Lilly. "Tell these people that this man is not lame. He has no paralysis and never has had. He would ridicule them and all the Powers in Heaven!" Her voice penetrated to every corner of the great auditorium. There is no fury like the fury of the gentle.

Thérèse Ursule covered her face with her hands. Bob Hardy limped down the steps. Better to make the public believe that foreign woman a fraud than to lose his greatest asset.

The girl patient's turn was next. She was threatened with blindness. Thérèse Ursule prayed over her. She was not benefited. The audience grew restive. What was all this? A sort of joke? Jules cursed softly beneath his breath.

After the half-blind girl, the man with the harelip presented himself. There was a ripple of laughter when he spoke to the doctors. When Thérèse Ursule took his hand he winked over his shoulder. Someone whistled in the gallery. There was a burst of laughter. Lilly

sobbed. Several people left their seats and hurried out. They had neither time nor patience for such foolishness.

Thérèse Ursule sank to her knees. "O gentle Virgin, help me! O Blessed Jesus, help me! Do not desert me, my dear God! They take me for a joke and it is my whole life. They do not know. Forgive them." She clasped her hands and looked towards Heaven. The harelipped man stood by awkwardly.

"Curtain! Band!" a harsh voice yelled. The band struck up "The Holy City."

As the curtain fell a brilliant light flooded Thérèse Ursule's kneeling figure. Jules hurried from the building.

A moment later the stage was filled with swarming workers. The grey ivy-covered walls flew to the ceiling as if by magic. Property men tore up the grass mat, hurried off with boulders. Through the curtains came a throaty singing:

I'm sittin' on top of the world,
Just rollin' along, just rollin' along.

Thérèse Ursule was still kneeling.

"Excuse me, Miss!" The flowering tree

from "Tu's" grave brushed them on its way to the property room.

Thérèse Ursule walked as though in a trance. "I must be alone, Lilly. Will you wait for me at the hotel ——"

She passed a man in pink tights cracking a whip. There was a little crowd clustered inside the stage door. Girls chattered. Miss Lulu Honey's troupe of Diving Belles were going home. One of them sat in the stage doorkeeper's room. Her ankle was bound up. She had hurt it that evening while doing a backward dive. The first night of the New York engagement. She wouldn't be able to use it for a month at least.

"Hell, it's just my luck. God knows I need to work."

The unshaded electric bulb lighted up her painted cheeks and resigned lips. A radiator sizzled in the corner. The walls were plastered with performers' photographs.

Thérèse Ursule paused in the doorway. The girl stared at her. Thérèse Ursule put her hand on her shoulder. "If it is God's will that

you should work, you will do so." In another moment she was gone.

"Say, Ethel, did you see that French artist? You know, the one they billed as a healer? She came in here and spluttered something at me."

"Well, you needn't fret. She may be a knockout in her home town, but she's a frost here. Why, they had to ring down on her act."

"No. Gee! She's got some lamps on her though. I've never seen anybody with such shining eyes."

"I expect she hypnotises 'em. Here, lean on my shoulder. Jack's found a taxi." They started out. "Listen, which foot are you limping on anyway?"

The girl put both her feet to the ground. She felt no pain.

"Well, am I crazy?"

"Allah is great!"

"No, Ethel, joking aside—there's something funny about this. Look, the swelling's almost gone!" She stamped her foot.

The taxi drove off towards Sixth Avenue.

"Say, Ethel, don't let's go to a eat shop. Let's have supper at home tonight."

"The boys'll be waiting."

"That won't hurt 'em for once. Somehow I don't feel in the mood for a noise just now."

They climbed the steps to the elevated railway.

"Thank God, this damn' ankle wasn't really sprained!"

Two people were astonished that night.

Jules, sitting alone in his office, wondered how the hell that girl had known Bob was a fake cripple.

High up in the flies a man climbed over to a spotlight. That lamp was seldom used. It was not connected with any current now. He wiped his brow, mystified. No, the blaze that lighted up Thérèse Ursule could not have come from there. Yet, as electrician in the theatre, he knew there was no other lamp. He had even seen it shining.

"Say, Bill, got any hooch on you? I got to have a drink."

He held the bottle to his lips with trembling hands. Emmanuel Lupez was frightened.

XX

MAI drove Lilly back to the hotel. She talked all the time.

“Tomorrow it’ll probably be better—you know first nights are often like that. I think Jules ought to show the singers—I always said that—it would make all the difference if the public could see them singing—fills up the stage, see?—and particularly when she hasn’t had any stage experience. She ought to have opened this afternoon and got sort of used to the footlights before tonight. Everybody was there—Jules knows how to get the right people in—where do you think Mademoiselle is? Do you think she’s all right? Oughtn’t we to do something about her?”

There was nothing they could do but wait. Mai was very restless. She did not like people to disappear in this way. She telephoned to Jules. Didn’t Lilly think they ought to tell the police?

“You know New York is awfully dangerous

—and she's so young and all. You know, it's a funny thing, but I just love Mademoiselle. I really do. I never saw anybody like her before. Oh, I wish she'd come back. Supposing somebody's hit her on the head? I would feel just awful if anything happened to her."

At two o'clock Mai went home. She just couldn't stay all night. She made Lilly promise to let her know the first thing in the morning whether Thérèse Ursule was back. "Poor little thing, wandering about in the dark. You know, I think those capes you wear are awfully cute—only, well you see on the stage things are different. People like to see something simple but elegant. They ought to be satin or velvet, you know, and cut so as they drape well. Make a picture, a real picture, you know. Everything on the stage ought to make a picture. Well good-night, dear. Get a good sleep and try to forget everything. That's what you must do. Oh, I wish that poor little girl would come home. You know they say the town is full of white slavers. Suppose they got her—well, telephone the first thing. I'm awfully anxious."

Mai had scarcely left the room when the telephone rang. Someone wanted Thérèse Ursule badly. The person did not leave a name. No, whoever it was would ring again. At three o'clock the person rang again. At half past three still again.

"Oh, try to find her. It's very urgent. If she comes in, tell her to come quick to No. 393 West 54th Street. You won't fail? Make her hurry. She must be quick."

Lilly began to be frightened. All Mai had said alarmed her. Then the mysterious telephone calls—who could it be? "O God, make her come back soon. Protect her. God, like she says you always do."

At four o'clock Thérèse Ursule returned. Lilly sobbed in her arms. "You scared me so. I couldn't stand it if anything happened to you."

Thérèse Ursule quieted her. "Lilly, and have you so little faith?" She had believed that in all New York there was one person who trusted God entirely—Lilly Field.

The telephone rang once more.

"But, Thérèse, you must have walked for miles. Take a taxi to this place."

"No. For years I couldn't stand. I am so glad to walk now. It is such a privilege."

West 54th Street is lined with brown stone houses, all exactly alike. They were formerly private residences. Now they are theatrical boarding houses, cheap lodgings and dismal flats. There are restaurants in what were once comfortable basements. There are heavy blank doors behind which drink is sold and many dark mysteries take place. After midnight this street is largely given over to cats that prowl among the battered dustbins in search of food. Now and then a burst of music comes through those brown stone walls, or a door opens and a man walks whistling down the street. But the real life behind them is not seen. The desperate struggles, the bitter disillusion, the momentary triumphs, the fierce passions, all making up the sordid lives spent in these sinister surroundings.

Thérèse Ursule and Lilly hurried along the deserted pavements. They found Number 393 without difficulty. A gas jet lighted the square

of glass above the door. On it was written "Eldorado Apartments." A brass plaque with a row of buttons was fastened at one side. There were names beside each button. They had been told no name, so they did not know which bell to ring. The air in the street was fresh and chilly. The lamps cast little islands of light at regular intervals. A policeman walked slowly through one of them, tapping his baton against the iron railings. There was no other sign of life.

Suddenly the door behind them opened. A flood of fetid air rushed out.

"Come in, I bin waiting for you."

A woman led the way up several flights of steps. She wore a blue serge dress trimmed with tarnished gold braid and red felt bedroom slippers. The house smelled of cheap scent and gas. There was a worn green carpet on the stairs. A small dog yapped as they passed a landing.

On the third floor an open door cast a square of light in the narrow hall. Thérèse Ursule and Lilly were taken into a small room.

"Just wait a minute. Oh, I'm glad I found

you at last." The woman's eyes were red and swollen. "Sit down. I'll be back."

An iron floor lamp with a pink shade trimmed with lace and dusty paper roses stood in one corner. There were cigarette ashes on the floor, photographs on the walls. The furniture was imitation oak. A chair with sagging springs stood near a table on which lay a copy of "La Vie Parisienne."

They heard groaning and a whispered conversation. The door opened and the woman returned with a man wearing gold spectacles.

"This is Dr. Fleisher. He says you can go in now. Only Mademoiselle, if you don't mind. He wants to see her by herself."

Thérèse Ursule was shown into a bedroom. It was almost entirely filled by a double bed. Shoes were heaped in a corner. Pink powder was spilled on the dressing table. A sheet of paper was stuck against the gas jet to keep the light from shining on the patient. A man was lying in the bed. His hair was black and tousled.

"Is that you? Come closer—I can't see—bend over." He raised his head and peered

into her face. "Oh God, yes, it's his eyes." He fell back on the pillow, groaning. "Oh, and I've got to meet him now. What'll I do when I see him coming towards me?"

Thérèse Ursule spoke to him gently. For several minutes he lay without moving and his breath rattled in his throat.

"Listen, put your ear down. I'm near the end now. Bad liquor did it. I saw that light shining on you in the theatre and I took a drink of bad liquor. It's done me in. I know—that damn doctor needn't try to fool me." He stopped for breath. "You come from Peille, don't you?"

"Yes, I come from Peille."

"Is old Mère Lupez living still?"

"Yes, she is living still, and every night she puts a light in her window to guide her son Emmanuel home."

"Well, she can blow it out now. I'll never go back to Peille again. Yes, I'm Emmanuel, Emmanuel Lupez—and I ran away from home because—just wait—breath ——" Thérèse Ursule stroked his forehead.

"Air!" She opened the window. Emmanuel's voice was weaker when he spoke again.

"Your father never killed that old priest. I did it. I did it and Marie Dumaine helped me put the blame on him. She's dead and gone, so I might as well tell you. She confessed it to a priest before she died. I had to tell you because when I saw you tonight I knew you were holy. But your father never harmed a soul." His voice was scarcely more than a whisper. "Pray for me, Thérèse Ursule, pray for me. God Almighty'll listen to you."

Thérèse Ursule prayed. In his extreme agony Emmanuel did not think what her feelings might be after his confession. He clung to her hand and talked in broken sentences.

"How is he getting on now?" The doctor stood behind Thérèse Ursule. Emmanuel's wife peeped in at the door.

"Leave me. I'm not done yet. Get out."

They went back to the parlour.

"He had to see her. You know my husband comes from the same part of the world as Mademoiselle. It's terrible the bad liquor you get these days. I was up here getting ready to

go to bed when I heard him calling. I had to help him upstairs. He said, 'Josie, I'm done for. I bin poisoned with bad liquor.' I thought he was just drunk. Somehow I didn't think it could happen to us. I put him to bed and gave him some gin. I thought it might buck him up, you know, and our gin's good and pure. We get it from one of the best bootleggers in New York. He's always so particular about his liquor. You know he's French."

Josie wept and rambled on. She told how she'd been married for twelve years. "I used to know that French girl he came over here with, and she was tough, tough as you make 'em."

And in the bedroom Thérèse Ursule prayed for the man who had sent her father to the guillotine. Sometimes his mind was wandering, sometimes it was clear. Suddenly he leapt from the bed and with swaying steps went to the chest of drawers. He threw the contents on the floor in his trembling haste.

"It's here! It's here somewhere!"

Thérèse Ursule tried to make him lie down again. His fingers clutched a small black box.

"Take it. You're going back to France some time." He pressed the box into her hand. "Give it to a fellow named Bill Sands—oh, I'm eaten up with pain—Bill's a chauffeur—family named Thomas—Villa Agapit—above Villefranche. I won it off him—my dice were loaded—promise me you'll give it to him—do you think God ——" He crumpled up on the floor.

The doctor and Josie helped get him on the bed. Josie lay across his body weeping. Thérèse Ursule promised to do what he asked her. The doctor prepared another dose of medicine. His spoon rattled against the thin glass. Before he could put it to his lips, Emmanuel was dead. They covered the body with a sheet. Outside another day had started.

The doctor left. Josie slumped into a chair and whimpered. What was going to happen to her? Of course, Emmanuel had always earned good money and they had spent it too. How would she get him buried? To think that this had happened to her. Now and then she crept to the motionless white figure and looked at it in awe. Thérèse Ursule and Lilly tried

to clean the place and help her all they could. The life in the rest of the house went on as usual.

| That night wounds appeared in Thérèse Ursule's side and on her feet. Her face seemed lighted by a heavenly beauty.

"I walked through lonely dark streets and I held death's hand. God spoke to me. His voice comforted me and told me not to be discouraged. And now in His mercy He has sent me these further signs. He is guiding us, Lilly. His will shall be done, and quickly, Lilly, quickly. I feel my work on earth is nearly finished."

Thérèse Ursule put the little box in a safe place. Emmanuel had asked her to give it to his friend with her own hands and say nothing to anyone else about it. She did not even tell Lilly.

XXI

So THÉRÈSE URSULE was a failure. The World's Greatest Wonder Worker had not accomplished a single wonder. The morning papers were sarcastic. Many attributed her powers, whatever they might be, to hypnotism. "Saint A Flop" headed one of the criticisms. Another announced that it might interest its readers to have a short résumé of the life of the French peasant woman who had been heralded far and wide as a divine healer. This paper stated that in 1914 Thérèse Ursule had been imprisoned for aiding an enemy of her country, but had been discharged as being mentally unbalanced; that her mother was a gipsy woman who had been killed in a mountain accident, and that her father was guillotined, convicted of the brutal murder of an elderly country priest. A fine parentage for a so-called representative of God! The woman obviously possessed a certain power, the power of a hysteric. Below this paragraph one of the

doctors who had examined Thérèse Ursule stated that the wounds upon her brow and in her palms were genuine abrasions. It was impossible to state how they had occurred. She could have inflicted them herself with any sharp instrument, or it was quite possible that they might have appeared as she claimed. There were many similar instances found among great fanatics.

Jules read all these things with indifference. He knew the game was up. The management of the theatre had refused to let Thérèse Ursule appear a second time. Already Harry McCarney, the Ukulele King, had been engaged to fill her place. His name was being put up in lights above the entrance, where hers had been.

Jules came to Thérèse Ursule prepared for tears, for threats of a lawsuit, claims for damages; a struggle at all events.

"Well, sweetheart, I hope you had a good sleep last night because I've got some bad news for you."

"I don't know what bad news is."

Thérèse Ursule sat with calm eyes. Jules told her what the morning papers wrote.

"You see, you got to show these guys. If you'd just done one miracle. Now that paralysed chap—you could have cured him. I had it all arranged, I mean he was ready to be cured, and I know you can do these things because I've seen you at work. I believe in you, only I wish you'd told me about your father and all, because even if you had got over, that little bit of news would have put the kibosh on you. One miracle might have got over that though, if they'd just seen you do *something*."

"Lilly, explain to Mr. Fosterman that the people in Peille believe first in God. We must first believe in His power to see His wonders. To Him all things are possible. Here they are not surprised to see a fire glow or flowers bloom, yet those are His mysteries too. Wherever we look, God's marvels surround us. How can one set a limit to them? How can one say God can do one thing and not another? Oh, open your eyes and your hearts and let beauty in. The Lord of Hosts will give each of us beauty for the ashes we pile around us."

Jules looked at her with a vague expression. Just what should he reply to such a speech?

He cleared his throat. Better to keep to the subject. Since the engagement was a failure, the sooner he could finish with it the better. There was a boat sailing that night. He wanted Thérèse Ursule and Lilly to sail on it. No use to go on paying for that expensive suite. He tackled the kernel of the matter.

"That's true. All she's saying is true. I don't question it myself, only this is a tough proposition over here where everybody's got a lot to do, so we've got to deal with it from that point of view. The Palace management won't let us go on there this afternoon and I just don't feel justified in taking a theatre or a hall for her. Of course, we might get damages out of the Palace, but what's the use, I ask you, what's the use of causing trouble? It would cost a lot of money and then we might lose."

"I have no claim, Mr. Fosterman, no claim of any kind. But if I had I should not resort to law. St. Guillaume teaches us to suffer ourselves rather than disturb the peace—anything to preserve tranquillity."

This was indeed easy. Jules lost no time in

mentioning the boat. Thérèse Ursule made no objections.

"I will do what you tell me, Mr. Foster-man."

"I appreciate your just attitude, Mademoiselle. I wish all artists were like you, I do indeed. You're a real sport and I don't want you to lose by it, see? Of course, I can't go so far as to do any building for you. I wish I could. That's a beautiful location for a house you've chosen—I mean a Church—but I've got a cheque here and I'm ready and willing to fill it out for any reasonable sum." He took out his cheque book and sat, pen poised above it. "What do you say? Anything within reason."

"A poor man died last night, Mr. Foster-man. Will you pay for his funeral?"

"Sure." He wrote down Emmanuel Lupez's address. "I'll send Sam Silvey over to attend to it and I'll go one better too—I'll give his widow a job if she wants one."

Thérèse Ursule thanked him. She was fortunate to have such a good kind friend.

"My wife's been crying all night. I've never seen her set her heart on anything so much.

You've sure got her goat. I don't know how she'll take the news that you're sailing tonight. Honest, I'm afraid to tell her and that's the truth." Jules folded up his cheque book and took his leave. "I'll see you off on the boat, girls, you needn't worry about anything. Just have a good quiet rest. After all you went through last night you need it." He beamed upon them. His step was light. He felt happy.

"She sure is a saint. I don't give a damn if her old man did get it in the neck for murder. Often I feel like murder myself when I come up against authors and artists these days. She wouldn't take a five cent piece for herself, now what do you know about that?"

Sam Silvey did not know anything about it. He contented himself by saying, "My God!"

If Thérèse Ursule's hopes were dimmed, if she felt failure in any way, she showed no sign of it. Her faith in God's wisdom did not flicker for one moment. "The Abbé Sextus would not have given me those plans, the Blessed Saviour would not have spoken to me as He has, if I were not to be His servant. The

monastery will be rebuilt, Lilly. This journey, everything that happens to us is part of our dear Lord's mysterious design. The greatest results often hang by the slenderest threads."

Mai came to say good-bye.

"The truth is New York isn't ready for miracles, that's the trouble," she repeated over and over again. "They are just not ready for miracles here."

"Perhaps the wonders of God are not for sale," Thérèse Ursule replied. "He sent me here for other reasons."

"Well, I'm glad you can take that view, Mademoiselle—I wish you'd let me call you 'Thérèse' like Miss Field does, I never have been taken with anybody so much before—but I'm practical, I guess it's my nature, and I know what you can do and I would like everybody else to know too."

Mai wore a black dress, she was so sad. Her purse was full of money. She was determined Thérèse Ursule should not leave New York with empty hands. Tears stood in her eyes and she had to re-powder her nose constantly.

“So silly. I’m such a fool, always was. Do you mind if I wash my hands?”

Mai returned. She did not sit down again. “Well, I’ll come by in the car to take you to the boat tonight. I never shall forget you, girls, I really shan’t.” She kissed them. “I expect you’ve got your packing to do now. Let me know if you want anything at all.” She left them.

“Thérèse, look! Look what’s here!”

The washbasin in their bathroom was heaped with money. Five dollar bills, ten dollar bills overflowed the brim. Mai had washed her hands.

Thérèse Ursule and Lilly took the money and went into the streets. Poverty is not hard to find. Children were lighting bonfires in the gutters, running back and forth, yelling, shouting. Thérèse Ursule bought them peppermint drops and other sweets. She paid a smiling organ grinder to play for them to dance. There were rents that needed paying, gas bills to be met, invalids without food. Beggars clustered round her. She gave to everyone who asked.

"He's doin' you, Miss, don't give him anything."

"Tell them, Lilly, I trust them. If they ask wrongfully, then they will suffer, not I."

Street lights blotted out the stars. The tide of amusement seekers once more swept down Broadway. The last dollar was gone.

"And we've only been in one street, Lilly, only in one street of this great city."

Thérèse Ursule was very pale. Her side was bleeding. Lilly had to help her back to their hotel. Gratitude and blessings followed them. Poor people put out their hands to touch her skirt. They collected in a struggling mass upon the dock to see her leave, to beg her to come back to them.

"Well, I swear!" Neither Jules nor Mai could understand the scene. "I almost feel like it would be worth keeping her here and taking a theatre after all. But it's too late; besides, those people could only buy gallery seats and gallery seats won't pay the expenses of a theatre."

There were no photographers to photograph

this departure, there were no newspaper men to write about it.

Thérèse Ursule waved to her new friends from the deck. Mai cried. The boat glided out into the river.

"Well, honey, that's over." Jules blew his nose. "What about having supper in that new night club in 57th Street? We need something to cheer us up." He took out a long cigar.

"No smoking here," a sharp voice reprimanded. "Oh, beg pardon, Mr. Fosterman, didn't see who it was. Thank you."

The man took a cigar. Jules and Mai drove up to 57th Street. The Maxes, the Eds, the Jakes, the Georges were all there.

"She may be the goods all right, Jules, but take it from me, she wouldn't ever cut any ice in this burg."

"How much did she stick you for breaking her contract?"

"Nothing, boys. You're all wet about that little woman. She wouldn't take a penny."

"Hell, I never knew anybody as lucky as you. If I bring one of these French stars over

here they take whatever cash there is lying about."

The conversation changed to plays and plans for the season.

On the boat Thérèse Ursule and Lilly watched the lights of New York fade into the distance and finally give place to the stars. The waves splashed softly and seagulls screamed in the darkness. Boards creaked gently. The blue days of voyage began once more and Thérèse Ursule waited for the miracle she knew God was preparing for her.

XXII

*H*ALF way up the steep slopes rising from Villefranche harbour stands the Villa Agapit. It has a long white façade with green shutters. Tall earthenware pots filled with gay flowers line the terraces, and the lace-like boughs of old pepper trees frame the view of green Cap Ferrat and the bright blue bay.

Thérèse Ursule and Lilly Field climbed the narrow lane that leads from the coast road to the gates of the villa. They walked slowly because the sun was hot and Thérèse Ursule's side and feet were painful. Cascades of pale blue plumbago and scarlet bougainvillæa fell in a tangled mass over the old plaster walls on each side of the way. Humming birds darted in and out among the foliage.

"Wait here for me, Lilly. I will not be long."

They stood before the high iron gates bearing an elaborate crest. "By Death We Conquer" was the motto of the Russian Prince to

whom the Villa Agapit had formerly belonged. The gilt upon the letters of these words was now nearly worn off. The Prince was dead, shot by the Bolsheviks in Kazan during the first months of the Russian Revolution. Americans now owned the villa.

A zigzag drive led from the gates to the house. Thérèse Ursule was soon out of sight along it. Lilly waited. She knew Thérèse had come there with a message from Emmanuel, nothing more. The noise of the boat was still in her ears. They had landed less than an hour ago. No one knew they were arriving. They had hurried across the open square for fear of recognition. Thérèse Ursule wanted no delays. They still had many miles to walk before they reached Peille.

Home, home again. Lilly longed for the familiar walls and faces. What would Madeleine Tulec say when she saw them back so soon? What would everybody say? Old Poulbot? Perhaps he'd take too much to drink. Monsieur Suluson? The Abbé Brunoy? Well, he had always been against their going to America.

“And he was right.”

Now that Thérèse Ursule was out of earshot Lilly relieved her feelings by saying these words aloud. She repeated them several times and shook her head. Still, it had been an interesting journey, even if nothing had come of it. She idly watched the great white ship, so recently their home, turn and steam from the bay on its way to Genoa. How funny to think that she knew people on those decks. The woman with the green sports coat was probably polishing her nails. The elderly New England couple always read aloud to each other in the afternoons. They were probably reading now, and the tall black-bearded man was probably pacing the deck. Ten miles a day was his rule.

The sharp click of picks and shovels came from the main road far below her. French workmen seemed to spend their time digging ditches along the roads, filling them in, then digging them again. Bared to the waist, they laughed and joked as they worked. At sunset they would go flying off on bicycles to play bowls along the sea-front. Thérèse Ursule

was taking a long time. Lilly looked up the drive. There was no sign of her returning.

Just before reaching the villa the drive divided. One road led to the main entrance of the house, the other to the back door and garage. Thérèse Ursule took the latter road. She came to an abrupt turning. Beside it was a small paved terrace with a stone balustrade. There were comfortable garden chairs on the terrace and it was shady. An elderly nurse sat there sewing. She had a big bow of black satin ribbon on her head with long streamers down her back. Beside her stood a child's perambulator covered with a white net. Thérèse Ursule paused a moment to catch her breath. The nurse smiled and asked her to sit down.

"Why, you've cut your foot, Mademoiselle."

"No."

Thérèse Ursule leant back and closed her eyes. The nurse wondered who she could be. Perhaps a nun come begging, but she had never seen a nun dressed just like that before. Thérèse Ursule's face looked almost transparent against the orange-coloured cushions of the chair. Her hands lay limply in her lap. "Must

have walked a long way," the nurse thought and went on with her sewing, "poor thing, she doesn't look strong either."

After a while Thérèse Ursule opened her eyes. The blue Mediterranean stretched before her as far as she could see.

"Can you tell me if there's someone here named Bill Sands?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle. Sands is the chauffeur."

They spoke in low voices, so as not to wake the baby. The nurse lifted up a corner of the net for Thérèse Ursule to see him.

"I call him Toto, but he's got a real English name—Vendow, Vendell, something like that—I can't say it."

The baby opened his eyes and stared at them like a robin.

"See how good he is? He wants supper. Don't he want his supper?" She kissed him on his soft pink shoulder, then folded up her sewing and laid it in a battered wicker basket. "Nounou's going to get her little darling's milk this minute." The baby never blinked.

"If you'll wait here, Mademoiselle, I'll tell

Sands there's someone to see him. 'Those last few yards up to the house are terrible steep.'

The old woman bustled off. A moment later Thérèse Ursule heard her call and a man's voice answer. The baby sucked his thumb, one foot poised in the air.

Suddenly the stillness was broken by a loud swishing sound. A large car was backing down the drive. A man screamed, "Jesus!"

The car swayed. Pebbles flew. The great thing was making straight for the terrace. Thérèse Ursule snatched up the baby. There was no escape. She felt a terrible blow. Her body was melting, melting. Music filled her ears.

Lilly heard the screams. Her heart stood still. They had pushed the heavy motor off Thérèse Ursule before she reached the terrace.

"Pinned against the balustrade" . . . "Oh, God, Oh, God!" . . . "Is she breathing?" . . . "How did it ever get loose?" . . . "Give her air" . . . "Not a scratch, she saved Baby" . . . "Who is she?" . . . "There's a doctor in Beaulieu, that's nearer."

Tears ran unheeded down Bill Sands' cheeks.

"The brakes were on, I swear, I'd been cleaning it. I always knew that place in front of the garage wasn't big enough when you got four cars on it—but the last thing I looked at was the brakes."

Lilly knelt on the ground. "Thérèse! Thérèse Ursule! Can't you hear me, darling?" She took one of the poor limp hands in hers. The wound in the palm bled slightly. "You've killed her. You've killed Thérèse Ursule Corbeille. There's no one in the whole world to take her place and you've killed her."

Thérèse Ursule's eyelids flickered, opened. She looked wonderingly around her, then smiled at Lilly. "No, Lilly—not killed—given life."

They carried her into the villa. She lay in a darkened room. For twelve hours she did not speak.

"Who would have thought that little thing had so much vitality?" White-capped nurses tiptoed round her. At intervals they leant over to see if she still breathed. "She can't last much longer." They shook their heads

and went over all the details in gruesome whispers.

Lilly Field sat beside the bed. Her eyes were dry, her lips were dry. She held an open Bible in her lap.

Within two hours the news of the disaster was known in Villefranche. Men and women gathered in clusters on the quay. They spoke in low voices, like people in the presence of death. Many of them climbed up to the great white villa. Love for Thérèse Ursule gave them courage to enter the high wrought iron gates.

Mr. Thomas saw each one. "No, she has not regained consciousness. Everything that can be done for her will be done." . . . "No, the doctor will not let anyone see her."

They were shown the square of asphalt from which the car escaped. Broken twigs marked its track down to the terrace.

"Yes, the chauffeur had been cleaning it. He had just stopped to go down and see Mademoiselle Corbeille. We don't know why she wanted him."

There were red stains on the terrace. The

poor people stood and gazed at them, shaking their heads. They told Mr. and Mrs. Thomas of her miracles and her life in Peille.

By the next day there was a steady stream of beggars, gipsies and peasants to the Villa Agapit. They knelt beneath Thérèse Ursule's window and prayed. Many of them brought presents—a pat of butter, fresh trout, salve made from mountain herbs, bunches of flowers, leaves, berries. Whatever they could offer they wanted Thérèse Ursule to have.

The Abbé Brunoy said the prayers for the dying. Candles burned; the air was filled with incense.

“ ‘Depart, Christian Soul, out of this world, in the name of God, the Father Almighty, who created thee: in the name of Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who suffered for thee: in the name of the Holy Ghost who sanctified thee . . . ’ ” His voice choked.

Through the open window came the hum of many voices.

*Lord, have mercy upon us
Holy Mary pray for her,*

*All ye holy Angels and Archangels
 Holy Abel,
 All ye choirs of the just,
 Holy Abraham,
 All ye saints of God, make intercession for her
 Be merciful, spare her O Lord. . . .*

As the Blessed Sacrament touched her lips Thérèse Ursule opened her eyes and spoke for the first time.

“Christ in His great mercy will sustain me through these shadows with His body and blood. Praise God!”

She slept after that, and to the wonder of the doctors her crushed body resumed its natural shape. All bruises, all cuts, all broken bones were healed. Only her hands, feet and side continued to bleed. And in this condition she remained for four days, for she had three duties to perform and one request to make.

“Send for the Abbé Castel. I must confess to him.”

She saw old Mère Lupez and told her of Emmanuel’s death.

She handed Sands the box Emmanuel had sent him. It contained a medal won by him for bravery. Emmanuel had wanted it to show

off as his own. The poor man broke down completely. Thérèse Ursule blessed him.

"You must not be distressed. It is I who should weep for all my poor friends left behind me chained in sleep, while by God's mercy I may wake in Heaven."

On the fourth day the Abbé Castel arrived from Paris. He kissed Thérèse Ursule upon the brow. Her voice was very weak, scarcely more than a faint breathing. He knelt beside her bed while she confessed.

"The merciful God has been so kind to me, yet I have been very wicked. As a child I envied the children who could walk. Pray God to forgive me. I coveted a pair of shoes Madame Tulec was making. One night I tried to put them on. And the cart—do you remember the cart you brought that morning? I longed for it so when you took it away."

The Abbé Castel buried his face in his hands. He had meant to give her that cart next day, but had forgotten about it. A country priest has so many duties.

"And worse than all, I have placed temptation in the way of the weak." She told him

of the building fund that she and Lilly had tried to save.

When she had finished her confession she lay quite still. The Abbé Castel absolved her. Then she asked him to move her father's grave. She would like him to lie beside her mother and the ground to be consecrated. He promised to have this done.

“And help Lilly ——”

In one hand she held a sacred relic. Before her hung a picture of the Virgin Mary.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas were overwhelmed by all these happenings, for the Villa Agapit was changed from a fashionable Riviera villa into a place of pilgrimage. They realised the great loss Thérèse Ursule Corbeille would be to the whole of Provence.

“Of course, John, I know Sands was not to blame, but I feel we are responsible. If there were only something we could do.”

“There is.” The Abbé Brunoy told them of Thérèse Ursule's great ambition.

Mrs. Thomas tiptoed upstairs and into the room.

"Can she hear?" She bent over Thérèse Ursule's pillow.

"Thérèse! Thérèse Ursule!"

Thérèse Ursule looked up and smiled.

"I can go now," she murmured and gave a fluttering sigh.

"I am too late, too late, and I wanted her to know that we will rebuild the monastery for her. She gave her life for our boy's."

A twilight breeze swayed the muslin curtains. The room was filled with kneeling figures.

"I have lifted up mine eyes unto the mountains: whence help shall come to me.

"My help is from the Lord who made Heaven and earth . . ."

The Abbé Castel repeated the Vespers for the dead. Lilly sobbed.

So Thérèse Ursule's great work was accomplished. A diamond necklace, an injured puppy, a poisonous drink, and a medal of honour. Truly the ways of the Lord are mysterious and beyond human understanding.

XXIII

THE cart in which Thérèse Ursule Corbeille drove down to Villefranche was painted white and white cloth was draped upon it and the white donkeys were harnessed to it again. They dressed Thérèse Ursule like a bride, a white veil on her hair and an olive branch decked with berries and ribbons in her pale hands.

Up past Eze, through the pines to La Turbie and along the narrow road to Peille. The white cart with its white burden was taking Thérèse Ursule Corbeille home. The Abbé Castel walked in front. Hundreds and hundreds of black-clad men and women followed the procession. They sang as they walked and bells tolled from all the many churches that they passed. Old people and children, unable to go so far, knelt in the doorways and along the road as the cortège went by. They buried her in the little ruined chapel where she had passed so much of her life.

Three months after her death doctors came

and tried to buy her body. They had heard that it had been miraculously restored to shape after the terrible accident. They wanted to examine it. Lilly Field sent them away, for now that Thérèse Ursule was gone she tried to fill her place.

The country people heard of the doctors' visit and, little by little, the story spread that the doctors had not been refused. The rumour grew. What had been whispered began to be talked of publicly. There was much ill-feeling and distress.

Lilly Field consulted the Abbé Brunoy. They decided to open the grave so that all could see that the body was still there. When the coffin was unscrewed they found Thérèse Ursule radiant, as though in full health. Her cheeks were pink, her lips scarlet, her hair soft and shining with a greater beauty than ever during her lifetime. In her hands, besides the olive branch, was a sheaf of wheat; fresh poppies and blue cornflowers were mingled with the grain. They had not been buried with her. Three hundred people saw this miracle.

Great buildings now surround Thérèse Ur-

sule's tomb. They have slanting roofs upon which pigeons flutter. There are gardens laid out with high walls against which fruit trees bloom in spring and sag beneath the weight of fruit in summer. Chickens and turkeys and ducks fill the air with a cheerful noise. For this is the miracle of Peille, the Hospice of Thérèse Ursule and no one who goes to that door is turned away.

THE END

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